

# 일인군단

人軍團

성진(成珍) 게임판타지 소설



# One Man Army

-일인군단 -

- Part 2 -

-Author-

성진저

[ Chamber's Cleanup Service ]

# Chapter 30

## Shadowline and its Master (1)

Sanguine Knowledge 'Wyvern Blood' [unused].

: Allows you to succeed the strong power contained within the wyvern blood. You can overcome your physical limits through wyvern blood and be reborn into a new race.

Effects : Wyvern's Skin(B)[Increase in physical, magical defense.], Wyvern's Strength(A)[Strength and agility increases by 1.5 and movement speed increases by 20%.] Wyvern's Regeneration(B)[HP and MP recovery speed accelerates.]

Bloodline skill : Wyvern's Roar(A)[Roar loudly to burn your passion. Decreases maximum HP and movement speed for all enemies within 10m radius for 10 minutes and increase your own HP and attack power.>Cooldown time : 20 minutes<]

Bonus effect : All wyvern-type monsters do not attack you first, and you may tame wyverns easily with the appropriate skills.

From a glance, Sanguine Knowledge was a complete one, unlike Ancient Knowledge.

Since it was the succession of a bloodline, it could only be like that. However, Sanguine Knowledge was just as hard to get as legendary-grade items. From how Sanghyuk couldn't get even one 'Wyvern Blood' after numerous tries in his previous life, it could be seen that the drop rate was incredibly low.

'Wyvern Blood... it's definitely not bad. No, in fact, I'll be hard-pressed to find anything better than this. However, this isn't something that's suited to me. I did indeed leave out my last Soul Hole for a Sanguine Knowledge, but the Sanguine Knowledge I want is something else.'

The Sanguine Knowledge that Sanghyuk was aiming for wasn't something that he could currently acquire.

'If I absorb the Wyvern Blood, then it might boost me incredibly in the short term, but

in the long run, it will be a loss. It's better to stick to the plan.'

Sanghyuk looked further into the future. This was why he decided to draw the big picture he was drawing without seeking immediate benefits.

'And I can sell this anyway so I won't make a loss. In fact, if I put this out right now... I might really cause an uproar.'

Right now, the users didn't even know that there was something called the Sanguine Knowledge. However, if Wyvern Blood was revealed right now, the users' attention would all swing this way.

'Looks like I should think carefully about how to dispose of this.'

It wasn't like he needed to sell it immediately so he decided that it would be better to sell it after he organized his thoughts.

Sanghyuk put the Wyvern Blood in the virtual warehouse at the bank and had a look at the emerald ring that he got as a quest reward.

Accessory-type items were relatively rare in EL, so it was an incredible stroke of luck to acquire a complete accessory like this.

Emerald ring [Rare]

- A ring made from the eye of the green wyvern. A mysterious power could be felt from it.

[Basic stats] Agility +20

[Special stats] Poison resistance +40

[Special effect] Detoxify(B) [Cures poison.]

'Oho, this isn't so bad.'

Sanghyuk nodded his head in satisfaction and equipped it immediately. These kind of items were better to be used than to be sold.

Other than the ring, the rest were just so-so. Sanghyuk organized all of them and put them up on the commissioned sales store. And since he was there, he bought various cheap craft items.

Having finished organizing, Sanghyuk went his way to the 'Dusk Pavilion', the place most users gathered in Falcon City.

The Dusk Pavilion was a very large drinking house. Since EL sold various alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks through PPL (product placement) contracts, the numerous drinks of the world could be tasted in the Dusk Pavilion.

Not only that, a master chef NPC was there and he had no dish that he couldn't cook, so users could also taste the thousands of dishes across the world.

There were many users that fell in love with the cooking contents. Some of them later went on to become better chefs than the master chef NPC and acquired greater fame than even real life chefs.

Not only that, there were tablet PCs installed in the tables of the pavilion that allowed for 'internet connection'. This was impossible anywhere else and was only allowed in the Dusk Pavilion.

Delicious food and drinks, as well as internet searches lead to many users flocking to this place, and with that being the case, this place was landmarked as the meet-up place.

"Looking for long-range dealers for sewer dungeon!"

"Looking for a healer and a tanker for Snake Caves entrance."

"Anyone looking for a melee dagger dealer? I have confidence in my damage!"

...

...

Many users put up speech bubble macros for seeking a party in the Dusk Pavilion. Honestly, shouting it out loud was an annoying thing to do, so everyone put up macros above their heads while they ate or surfed the internet.

Sanghyuk wasn't here to look for a party, so he sat on an empty seat before ordering some food and looking around the internet. Since he was focused on fighting in Wyvern's Nest, he didn't know the current state of the world of EL.

In the end, EL was a world that he had to live with countless other people, so he couldn't just do everything alone and expect everything to go his way.

He had to do well himself and also had to watch how others were doing.

'Oho, the first guild to conquer the sewer dungeon is neither Terriculum nor Rising but Redline? Wait, did the future change because of me? I don't think that's the case... But it looks like Harkan's Iron Shield will go to Red Sun.'

Red Sun was the guild master of Redline and later would become the first generation pro gamer. His abilities were on the okay side, but couldn't be considered 'exceptional'.

'Snake Caves became a mess like I expected and... huh!?"

Sanghyuk found something while looking at the hot topics on the community forums.

'Dammit, no matter how I think about it, this is the chain quest that leads to Wyvern's Nest... and it's almost over?'

Unfortunately, the thing Sanghyuk didn't want seemed that it would happen soon.

'Hmm, around a week... and ten days at most. That will be the time Wyvern's Nest will be revealed.'

Honestly, there wouldn't be any problem if it was only the users from the quest that came to Wyvern's Nest. Wyvern's Nest wasn't small at all, so he just had to give some room to the other users.

However, places like Wyvern's Nest where the rewards were quite good to compensate for the difficulty could only be revealed to the community. Especially since highest-ranking users were running out of hunting fields.

'Looks like I should suck out as much juice as possible within the next week.'

Sanghyuk stood up after looking around the web for half an hour more. He originally had something to do, but it looked like squeezing out the juice from Wyvern's Nest

would take priority.



9 days.

In exactly 9 days, the first party of five appeared on the entrance of Wyvern's Nest. They were making joyous expressions as though they found the new continent.

"Wow, to think there was a hunting field in a place like this..."

"It's a high-level hunting field from a glance. I'll need to use 'Detect' skill up close, but those wyverns... they are definitely strong monsters."

"As strong as they are, their loot should be good as well. Oh! And now that I think about it, the expensive wyvern skin and teeth and claws are from here? Wait... doesn't that mean we're *not* the first ones here?"

"Eek? Really? We got through this hellish 22-chain quest..."

"Urgh, I still get nauseous when I think about it..."

"We cleared it easily thanks to the guild pushing our backs. The other parties are still stuck in the chain quests. Just which guild was able to come here first?"

They realized an incredibly frightening, yet important fact. However, just as they were coming to a realization, Sanghyuk was climbing down with another set of vines.

'I don't need to reveal myself already. Leaving the hunting field is a bit of pity, but I sucked out as much juice as possible, and I need to do some things before I leave the Land of Dusk, so let's just give it up.

-There's a user that solos a high-level wyvern monster- wasn't something that Sanghyuk want rumors about. Of course, he wasn't planning to hide forever. However, he was planning to stay low in the Land of Dusk and escape it faster than anyone to traverse the wide continent.

Having come back to Falcon City, Sanghyuk released wyvern skins, claws and teeth at a lower price and in larger quantities. Actually, he was releasing his stocks like this starting a few days ago.

The supply for wyvern skins, claws and teeth were very small, so they were sold out as soon as he put them on sale. Sanghyuk had cleared almost all of his stock like this.

‘Once they gather people and hunt for real, the prices will keep dropping.’

After clearing out his items, Sanghyuk started preparing the final and most difficult objective he had to do in the Land of Dusk.

This objective was something even he didn’t have the confidence to succeed in as someone who came to the past. In the first place, this was something that no one could challenge in his previous life so he couldn’t predict the success and failure of this matter.

Sanghyuk first went to look for Tokan, who he had the highest familiarity with and at the same time, a considerable influence on Falcon City. The information Sanghyuk had was limited, so he had to use the NPCs if he wanted more information.

“Hmm... ‘The Lord of the Footless Horse’, you say... I don’t know. That’s someone I haven’t heard of before.”

After pondering for a long time, Tokan shook his head. If even Tokan, one of the top three NPCs of Falcon City in terms of influence, didn’t know, Sanghyuk didn’t feel that this was going to be easy.

“Oh! Don’t be disappointed, and go to Vaize. He might know something.”

The ‘Seeker’ Vaize. Sanghyuk was planning to go look for him anyway if Tokan didn’t work out.

“Yes, I shall do that.”

Sanghyuk politely bid goodbye to Tokan and headed to Vaize’s research lab.

Fortunately, Sanghyuk could meet Vaize directly without any letter of introduction thanks to Tokan’s letter of recommendation and the fact that he learned elementalism.

Although not as much as Tokan, Vaize wasn’t an NPC that anyone could meet. Since he was at the center of many important quests, many users tried to meet with Vaize.

Perhaps due to that, when Sanghyuk entered Vaize's laboratory without doing anything, the users who waited outside the laboratory in wait of Vaize looked at the door that Sanghyuk just entered.

"Wh, what the hell?... Did that guy just enter without any letter of introduction?"

"Did you see his face? It was a user right?"

"He had a hood on so I didn't see his face, but I think he is a user."

"Dammit, I've been stuck here for days to get inside... so annoying."

"I should ask how he raised his familiarity with Vaize later when he comes out."

"You're naïve. Do you think that user will tell you? You're better off asking in InGamez."

"But is there really a way to raise familiarity with Vaize? Just getting the letter of introduction was so hard."

"There's a rumor that there's a tier on each letter of introduction, so it's hard to meet with Vaize with a low-ranked letter of introduction."

"Dood, that's such an annoying NPC."

While users discussed how to meet with Vaize, Sanghyuk was meeting with Vaize alone.

"The Lord of the Footless Horse, you say..."

"Yes, I wish to meet him."

"Why are you trying to meet him?"

Vaize looked at Sanghyuk with a very serious gaze.

"I have something I want to prove to him."

This was the important part. The words he was about to speak here were from virtual sources he had recreated with what little materials he had gathered in his previous life.

If these sources worked, then the situation would go as Sanghyuk wished to, and if it didn't, then he may as well be kicked out without achieving his objective.

“Prove? Prove what?”

Sanghyuk could read the faint emotions behind Vaize's expression when he heard that question.

‘This guy, he's definitely related!’

It was a little funny to battle with wits with an NPC and not a real user, but Sanghyuk felt that this was the time to bet everything.

“The empty seat of the master of the Shadowline. I am planning to prove that I have the qualifications to take that throne.”

The bomb was thrown. What remained now was to wait to see how that bomb exploded.

# Chapter 31

## Shadowline and its Master (2)

Having unexpectedly received a bomb, Vaize's eyes violently shook.

'Whoa, this game is so detailed in every aspect.'

Sanghyuk waited for Vaize's answer. If he was indeed related as Sanghyuk had expected, a reaction would definitely come.

Actually, the reason Vaize's eyes were shaking was not that he was related to the Shadowline.

Thanks to an unforeseen variable, an overload was put on EL's vast yet delicate quest logic. Thanks to that, Chaos, which managed all of EL's systems, had to interfere directly to normalize it.

Vaize's shaking came from this process.

Originally, a variable came from a completely unexpected source, but Chaos splendidly did its job this time again and made up a new quest line. Not only that, it didn't even report to the operating team as it judged that this wasn't a big problem.

In another game, this would have been impossible, but it was possible for EL. The transcendental artificial intelligence operator 'Chaos' managed the game perfectly to the point that it was 'too' perfect.

After a slight amount of time passed, Vaize slowly opened his mouth.

"Master of the Shadowline, do you understand what kind of position that is?"

You have received the hidden chain quest 'Secrets of the Shadowline.'

You may receive a penalty if you do not clear the quest. Will you accept the quest? Y/N

'It's here!'

Sanghyuk was inwardly overjoyed when the quest message appeared in front of his eyes. The fact that there was a penalty for failing meant that the rewards for succeeding were just as large.

This was why some users liked quests with penalties more than regular quests. Sanghyuk also knew that he had to undertake some risks in order to receive a larger reward.

'I'll gamble even if I lose!'

Having come to a decision, Sanghyuk quickly pressed 'Y' and spoke.

"A shadow of the world that sees, hears and speaks through invisible eyes, ears, and mouth and moves by borrowing the arms and legs of the shadow... it's existence yet a non-existence. Isn't that the master of the Shadowline?"

It sounded quite cheesy, but he had to do this right now. Naturally, this line was also something he had made up after interpreting the information he knew. He had prepared words that Vaize had to react to. Sanghyuk had prepared a lot for this objective.

Then how did Sanghyuk know about the Shadowline and its master, and could plan out this far?

The reason obviously lay in his previous life.

Sanghyuk heard something interesting while drinking with another coach he had as his junior while he was a director.

"... It's not that that friend of mine knows everything correctly since he also slipped at an important moment, but he predicted that the secret organization known as the Shadowline is very likely to be an information guild made by NPCs. He's the kind of guy who digs further and further once he's into something, you know? And what he got into was to make a ring of fate with all existing NPCs of Falcon City. It might sound crazy, but he focused on doing that for the whole 3 years after the game started. Then, he acquired an important quest. And that quest was related to the Shadowline..."

(omitted)... but that was his limit. Since he wasn't someone who leveled up properly, he couldn't help it. Anyway, he couldn't become the master of the Shadowline, or so he says. Honestly, I don't believe 100% of this story, but I can still remember it because he was so detailed about it. If there really is an NPC information guild and a user could become its master, wouldn't that be amazing?"

At the time, Sanghyuk had listened to his story for several hours while drinking. Like his junior, his story was so detailed, and that was what made him still remember it.

Actually, Sanghyuk had also investigated about the Shadowline himself, and surprisingly, he could find many traces of them.

From then on, Sanghyuk believed in the existence of the Shadowline, and perhaps due to that, the first kind of information he thought up of when he came back to the past was related to the Shadowline.

"...How much do you know?"

"I know what I know. However, until when are you going to keep the master seat empty? Everything will go wrong at this rate."

That vague last line was something he just tried out. Sanghyuk kept throwing vague lines like this to try out the other.

"It definitely isn't a position that we can leave empty for long."

Vaize was hooked by Sanghyuk's words and gave him another hint.

"That is why I need to prove myself."

Sanghyuk kept hooking Vaize with vague words.

"Understood. I shall transmit your intentions to them."

The hidden quest 'Secrets of the Shadowline' has been renewed to 'Lord of the Footless Horse'.

In the end, Vaize took the bait. With this, it could be considered that Sanghyuk crossed the first and most difficult barrier. Actually, Sanghyuk thought that he was more likely to fail with this method.

However, he wouldn't be able to get anything without a challenge, so he boldly challenged this matter and could acquire something beyond his expectations.



While Sanghyuk waited for Vaize's message, he disposed of the remaining items in the commissioned sales store and bought what he needed to.

Thanks to sucking some juice from Wyvern's Nest, he could earn a hefty sum. However, Sanghyuk didn't satisfy himself there and invested again.

The category he invested into this time were skill books. Basic skills and not Soul skills could be learned through skill books, and currently, the users didn't know exactly how these skill books worked.

The users only knew how to use the skill book itself. Using a skill book titled 'A' would get them the skill 'A'.

However, there was another use for the skill books. It was unknown to anyone yet... no, they had no way of finding it out. It was the skill book synthesis and enhancement.

Skill book synthesis and enhancement, right now, couldn't even be attempted. This was because only NPCs or users with abilities related to 'Synthesizer' could do it, but there were no NPCs capable of doing this in the Land of Dusk, and as there were no NPCs related to it, no users could get a related Ancient Knowledge.

Synthesizers could be seen first at the first city beyond the Land of Dusk and in the Hellfire Desert, 'Dantu' Oasis. And from that moment onwards, the users would also be able to synthesize and enhance skill books.

At the time, users complained to Raonsoft about why they placed such important NPCs beyond the Land of Dusk, resulting in them making a loss, but Raonsoft's answer was simple.

‘There are many Ancient Knowledge that could only be acquired outside the Land of Dusk. Synthesizer is just one of them.’

It was a really upsetting answer, but nothing would change no matter how users complained to them so they could only accept it. Basic skills could be erased unlike Ancient Knowledge with some karma, so the complaints didn’t last for long.

And skill book synthesis formulae were very simple. It was nothing like the card synthesis formulae.

However, the definite thing was that synthesized skill books were definitely better than normal skill books. And adding enhancement on top of this... no one glanced at basic skills later.

This was why Sanghyuk hadn’t learned any basic skills.

‘Even though basic skills are less important than Soul Skills, they can output great power if used well.’

A true master had to be able to use the basic skill slots that increased by 1 every 10 levels. Users who thought of basic skills as just free skills could never become rankers.

‘The piled skill books will completely disappear from the market once skill synthesis and enhancement system is found out. Especially in the case of enhancement, the failure rate will rapidly increase as the value increases so most of the skill books will disappear into that.’

Skill books could be enhanced to +10, and after +5, the success rate rapidly decreased.

Synthesizers didn’t only synthesize skill books or enhanced them but almost all other types of items, so the moment they appeared, the market prices of all items would meet a change.

‘No matter how much gold I have, I can’t hoard all the items, so let’s hoard the skill books that will become most popular and the ones I will use.’

Having come to a decision, Sanghyuk started gathering skill books. He was planning to hoard them as slowly as possible this time as well to avoid the attention from quick-witted merchants.

Since skill books were going to pile up until the cataclysmic moment, he didn't need to worry about stocks running out.

While Sanghyuk was repeatedly buying and selling in the commissioned sales store and the auction, Vaize transmitted Sanghyuk's words to the NPC named the 'Lord of the Footless Horse.'

And four days later... Sanghyuk finally got a message that the Lord of the Footless Horse was willing to meet him.



He, no, 'she', was the representative and operator of the largest 'pleasure' business establishment in Six-Nine street, 'Rainbow'.

Rainbow was a pleasure business establishment that represented Six-Nine street and was operated by NPCs alone, and the NPCs here were supreme beauties that were even hard to find in real life.

Due to law, they could not provide prostitution service, so the most that could be enjoyed was the lowest-level pseudo-sexual actions, but despite that, this place was always filled with male users. There were many users who waited hours upon hours to enter this place.

The reason Sanghyuk was meeting with the woman who operated such an amazing business establishment, was... because she was the 'Lord of the Footless Horse'.

Clothes that exposed a lot of skin, and an insane body figure, as well as a pretty face that would make any elves cry... Sanghyuk was trying to keep his calm while looking at the NPC in front of him.

'She's just an NPC, a program.'

He felt like he would be 'aroused' if he didn't keep hypnotizing himself. If he showed such a lowly figure in an important place like this, he might as well be kicked out, not to mention talking about the master of the Shadowline.

"I did hear it from Sir Vaize, but I still do not understand how you know about us."

She, no, Ilya, spoke to Sanghyuk while looking at his eyes.

"There's no perfect secret in this world."

Sanghyuk replied with a leisurely tone without panicking. He knew that the conversation with her was also a part of the quest, so he kept his pace as calmly as possible.

"A perfect secret, you say... Very well. Then I'll just acknowledge that you know about us. However, the seat of the master is different. That is not a place that can be taken by just anyone."

"Is there a name tag on the seat? I know that that seat isn't that kind of a seat. Isn't anyone capable of taking that place as long as they prove that they are fit to take that place?"

Sanghyuk threw a straight ball using his knowledge as much as possible. Actually, even he didn't know the details. He just predicted that this was the case and prepared this line beforehand.

"...Mmm..."

Tap, tap, tap, tap.

Ilya kept tapping on the armrest of her chair and stared holes at Sanghyuk. And Sanghyuk also looked directly back at her without avoiding her gaze.

"Phew, very well. Your proof of qualification... I accept."

She sighed and acknowledged Sanghyuk.

At that moment, the quest was renewed once again.

The hidden quest 'Lord of the Footless Horse', has been renewed to 'Proving Qualifications to become the Master of the Shadowline'.

This was a victory from audacity, no, from knowing the future.

# Chapter 32

## Shadow Duke of Falcon City (1)

“We call this the ‘Five Trials of the Shadow’.”

Ilya continued to explain.

“You are required to pass through these five trials in order to become the master of the Shadowline.”

Sanghyuk quietly listened to her words.

“It does not matter which order you do it in, but you need to finish all five trials within ten days. Also, you only have one chance. Not only that, you will pay the fitting price if you fail your challenge.”

This was a warning. It also meant that the opportunity to challenge didn’t come at a low price.

“Understood.”

Since he knew this anyway, Sanghyuk obediently nodded his head.

“Oh! I forgot one thing. You need to undertake the trials by yourself. If you receive any form of help from others... you will be disqualified.”

“Yes, I’ll keep that in mind as well.”

Another user may have been disappointed, but Sanghyuk was not disappointed at all. He was a solo player anyway. In fact, he was rather grateful that Ilya told him that he had to undertake the trials by himself.

“Then I wish you the blessing of the Shadow, Sir Immortal. Oh, since you’re here, why don’t you play around a little? Should I call for the shop’s ace? Or...”

Ilya stood up from her seat and made a smile that was fit to be called ‘enchanting’, and

pulled up her already short skirt. Momentarily, her thighs were exposed... Sanghyuk's instinct to assault her twitched inside him.

If Sanghyuk did not listen to the words from his junior in his previous life, he might have assaulted her naturally.

However, he knew that he couldn't be careless until the moment he left the shop. So, he suppressed his desires with his superhuman endurance.

"Let's play next time then."

You have cleared a hidden condition for the hidden quest 'Proving Qualifications to become the Master of the Shadowline'. The quest was renewed into 'Five Trials of the Shadow'.

Ilya's heart-thumping attack just now was her last test. If he didn't pass this, Sanghyuk would have been chased out with the quest failure penalty after struggling in pleasure.

"Ohoho, either you are of a very cautious mind, or you're impotent. Well, whichever you are, I think you have the basic qualifications to become the master of the Shadowline."

Spoke Ilya with a smile. For a moment, Sanghyuk didn't understand why 'impotency' was a requirement for the master of the Shadowline, but he still left Rainbow with a light smile.

"Phew, that was insanely tiring..."

Sanghyuk sighed and shook his head as soon as he left Rainbow.

'I'd rather kill a named monster by myself... that place must be a sorcerer's cave, dammit...'

Sanghyuk was a man, so there were some lewd demons in his heart as well. Since he was suppressing those lewd demons from going wild, he could only feel pain coursing through his body.

'I'll definitely undo the seal here once everything is over!'

Sanghyuk took in deep breaths to calm himself down. Then, he opened his quest window to check the details of the five trials he had just received.

### [ Quest ] 'Five Trials of the Shadow'

: Five trials have been given by the Ilya, the Lord of the Footless Horse. These requirements are necessary to become the master of the Shadowline. Time limit of 10 days. Prove your qualifications to become the master of the Shadowline by clearing all five trials!

#### Progress

- (1) Strength of the Shadow : Leave behind an achievement by killing one or more named-tier monsters. [Complete]
- (2) Affinity of the Shadow : Form a ring of fate with one or more legendary-grade NPCs. [Complete]
- (3) Talent of the Shadow : Engrave two or more 'Ancient Knowledge' into the Soul Holes. [Complete]
- (4) Wealth of the Shadow : Possess one or more unique-grade items. [Complete]
- (5) Endurance of the Shadow : Kill 3,000 rats that can be found across all of Falcon City, [0/3,000]

Rank : Hidden(S)

"Whoa..."

Sanghyuk was surprised after opening the quest window. A whopping four out of five was already complete.

'This is like, the perfect quest for me!'

Of course, this should be a coincidence, but he did definitely feel great.

'I just need to kill the rats then? Really, this is pretty easy.'

Killing rats definitely wasn't a hard job. However, it was a very annoying process since it consumed a lot of time. However, he didn't think that it was bothersome right now.

If he had to do the other four trials as well, then he might have received some stress due to the time constraints, but there was no need for such a thing.

"It's like the heavens are helping me."

Feeling good, he muttered while looking up to the sky. In the sky, an image of a newly-created idol group was floating on cloud advertising boards.

Of course, Sanghyuk was uninterested in the entertainment industry, so he didn't even know their group name, but he still put a thumbs up towards them.

As he had expected, killing rats while walking around the vast Falcon City was a bothersome job.

Since Falcon City was a very clean city, there weren't many rats to be seen in the first place. In the end, he found very few after searching around the darkest of places... and this was suffering for him.

Sanghyuk killed exactly 279 rats in 10 hours. At this speed, he had to hunt for rats for six days straight without doing anything else.

'If I had to do this quest with four other quests... urgh, that's horrifying.'

Only after killing some rats did Sanghyuk understand why that part of the quest was named the 'Endurance' of the Shadow.

Since Sanghyuk was very used to grinding, he could still endure. However, even if it was Sanghyuk, he would have despaired if he actually had to do five trials at the same time.



Luckily, his speed in exterminating the rats became faster as time went since he got used to it. In the end, he could fill the 3,000 in five days.

You have completed all five trials. Prove your qualifications to become the Master of the Shadow by going to Ilya.

“Fuu... I don’t want to see rats for a while.”

Sanghyuk heaved a deep sigh and wrapped the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip around his arm.

‘Is it the last barrier now?’

Honestly, even Sanghyuk didn’t know what would block his way from now on.

“Amazing. I didn’t know you would be so fast. Just five days... never did I imagine that there was a person that could achieve the Five Trials of the Shadow that usually can’t be cleared in 10 days, with just five.”

Ilya looked at Sanghyuk with a truly impressed, no, loving expression.

Ilya, the Lord of the Footless Horse, has fallen in love with you at first sight.

Your familiarity with Ilya increases by a large margin.

Your familiarity with Ilya increases by a large margin.

Your familiarity with Ilya increases by a large margin.

Your familiarity with Ilya increases by a large margin.

For a moment, Sanghyuk thought that he bugged out. However, it was no bug. This was an explosion in Ilya’s familiarity with him as she fell for him.

Sanghyuk also knew that this was indeed possible, albeit extremely rare. However, this was the first time he experienced it.

Your familiarity with Ilya has reached the limit! A ‘ring of fate’ was generated between

Ilya, the Lord of the Footless Horse, and the Dimensional Traveler Immortal!

You have acquired the rare-grade title 'Ilya's Man' by generating a ring of fate with the legendary-grade NPC, Ilya the 'Lord of the Footless Horse'.

'Mm? Ilya was also legendary-grade?'

Sanghyuk was surprised to find out that Ilya was a legendary-grade NPC. Actually, legendary-grade NPCs were supposed to be rare existences.

You have fulfilled the final hidden condition of the hidden quest 'Five Trials of the Shadow' by generating a ring of fate with Ilya. Congratulations. Your test of qualification has ended, and you have become the 'Master of the Shadowline'. You have acquired the special title 'Shadow Duke of Falcon'.

[You have acquired Silvermoon Fragments as a bonus for clearing the hidden chain quest.]

'Finally!'

When he heard the last system message, he subconsciously gripped his fist. The feeling of achieving something that was normally impossible was hard to be described in words.

"Ilya, in charge of Falcon City's Shadowline, greets the master."

Ilya politely greeted towards Sanghyuk.

Sanghyuk felt a strange sense of accomplishment while looking at her. He felt as though he had finally subdued a proud and arrogant woman and made her his.

Anyway, it wasn't a bad feeling.

You have become the master of the Shadowline, and your affinity with all NPCs of the Shadowline increases to 'colleague' stage.

You have taken over the S-rank NPC organization [Shadowline of Falcon City], and it will appear in your organization management window. You may efficiently manage the organization through the organization management window.

Users taking over NPC ‘organizations’ and managing them was a very common thing in Sanghyuk’s previous life. However, that was 5 years after the game started.

At first, it wasn’t even known that NPC organizations could be taken over. And in fact, this was the first time Sanghyuk heard about an S-rank NPC organization. He had seen numerous users who have taken over NPC organizations in his previous life, but they were A-rank at maximum.

‘S-rank organization... I did expect the rank to be high, but to think it’s actually S-ranked.’

Sanghyuk was surprised to find out that the Shadowline was S-ranked and not A-ranked like what he expected. Of course, this was a good thing for him.

‘Managing the organization sounds like a pain, so...’

Sanghyuk looked at Ilya. Honestly, managing NPC organizations was a very tiresome process as he had a lot to consider as well as to be cautious about.

However, Sanghyuk knew a method that could solve this problem in one go.

‘If I have an exceptional and loyal NPC... everything’s easy!'

The ‘proxy system’ existed for busy users like Sanghyuk. With that, he could solve this problem in one go.

Ilya could be considered the NPC optimized for the proxy system as well. Perhaps she might be better than Sanghyuk at it.

“Ilya, I’ll appoint you as my deputy. You’re qualified to become my proxy as you have led the Shadowline splendidly until now.”

“It’s an honor.”

Since his familiarity was high, there was no rejection or anything. She only accepted it

as though it was natural.

You have appointed Ilya the Lord of the Footless Horse as the proxy of Shadowline.

Everything went smoothly. Ilya explained the hierarchy of the Shadowline to Sanghyuk. Of course, Sanghyuk would be able to find that out through the system window, but Sanghyuk gladly allotted some of his time for his proxy.

Of course... the seal on the lewd demons in his heart had already been unsealed.

Sanghyuk was not impotent.

In fact, he was a youth with passionate, hot, overflowing blood.

The moment his seal was undone, he became a violent bull.

# Chapter 33

## Shadow Duke of Falcon City (2)

Although he couldn't achieve true 'union' with Ilya, Sanghyuk was still satisfied with the time he spent with her. Her body figure was more perfect than any other models that existed in real life. Her face was also something that would make elves cry in shame, so Sanghyuk could momentarily visit paradise.

Having spent a pleasant time like that, Sanghyuk left Rainbow and organized the things he had earned in his quest this time.

Title – 'Ilya's Man'

Grade – Rare

Description – Ilya has fallen for you. As a half-elf that succeeds the blood of elves... (locked: Many things are restricted due to unknown reasons.) Do you wish to know more of her secrets? Then steal her heart some more.

Effects – [Prefix: N/A] [Suffix: N/A] [Constant effect: Ah! My Ilya(A) : Can completely order Ilya for two hours across two days. You may use her as a mercenary in a party and may order her to do special missions. However, her identity is still 'locked', and her abilities are restricted.]

'Ilya... so she's a half-elf. No wonder she's pretty.'

Elves were a race at the extreme of beauty. Half-elves, born between humans and elves, were rumored to be superior to elves in beauty.

'However, an NPC with her abilities restricted... there's such a thing.'

In his previous life, Sanghyuk wasn't close to NPCs. Most of the things he knew about NPCs were heard from other people.

## Silvermoon Fragments [Set – rare +++]

- A pair of daggers passed down to the masters of the Shadowline. The Silvermoon Fragments are comprised of the Silversword and the Moonblade, and it symbolizes the power of the master of the Shadowline, so it could be considered a very special set of items.

[Basic stats] Attack power 70(+21), Agility +30(+9)

[Set effects] (2) Agility +20(+6)

[Special stats] Movement speed + 30%

[Special effects] >Concealment(A) : Able to hide into the darkness more easily.Moonlight blessing(A) : All stats increase by 5% when fighting under moonlight.>

[Bonus effects] (1) Agility+10 (2) Agility+15 (3) Agility+20

'Whoa... how is this rare grade? Is it because it's a triple plus on top of being a set item? No, the options are better than most unique-grade items. Not only that, the bonus effects... it's a triple agility crit. Awesome!'

Sanghyuk's jaws opened when he checked the Silvermoon Fragments. Even though the item grade was written as rare, it was superseded most unique-grade items.

Especially the basic stats and the set effects of pure agility was as though it was tailor-made for him.

Not only that, even the randomized bonus effects were triple agility criticals.

This was an extremely rare scenario.

'So it doesn't symbolize the master of the Shadowline for nothing?'

Sanghyuk nodded his head in satisfaction while putting away the Silvermoon Fragments.

There was only one left now. The title he was most expectant and curious about, Shadow Duke of Falcon City.

Once he checked this, he would have checked all of the rewards he gained in this quest.

Title – ‘Shadow Duke of Falcon City’

Grade – Special

Description – A special title given to the master of the Shadowline that has taken over the Falcon Shadowline. This title belongs to the master of the Shadowline, so it will naturally disappear once you lose the seat of the master.

Effects – [Prefix : Your presences becomes extremely faint as the shadow effect covers your body. Unless it's an extremely exceptional NPC, it's highly likely that they won't notice you.]

[Suffix : You can apply illusion effects to your body and change to a figure you want. There are a total of 7 types of illusion effects, and they can be set beforehand through figure customization. The seven figures cannot be customized again once it's set. However, if you maintain the illusion effect during battle, a penalty of -30% will be applied to all of your stats.]

[Constant effect: Your familiarity with all NPCs increase to ‘familiar’. However, some NPCs are exempt from this effect.]

“Wow...”

He was quite expectant from the moment he knew that it was a ‘special’-grade title. Special-grade was very different from the usual ‘rare’, ‘unique’, ‘legendary’ and the like.

They possessed abilities that couldn't be evaluated with common methods, and to compare with usual graded rankings of titles, they were treated as equivalents to legendary-grade titles.

In some aspects, they were valued as of greater value than legendary-grade as well.

‘It’s not a title that increases basic stats or anything, but the value of this title is

priceless.'

Sanghyuk realized the value of the title at a glance. Not to mention hiding his presence, his familiarity increasing to 'familiar' with all NPCs was absolutely priceless.

'With this, the earns from this quest... is the greatest! The best! It can't be better than this.'

Sanghyuk kept nodding his head with a very satisfied expression. He had set many objectives after he had returned in time, and many of those objectives were related to NPCs, so he very liked this option.

'Oh! The Shadowline... how do I go about using this?'

Sanghyuk didn't completely understand about the Shadowline, so he opened the organization management window quickly.

### [Management Window]

- Shadowline of Falcon City [S-rank]
  - Master: Immortal [Command rate : 50/250]
  - Proxy : Ilya [Credibility 150/250]
  - Description : The information guild that is in charge of the dark side of Falcon City. Numerous NPCs are acting as secret agents across the Land of Dusk. Their fighting power isn't considerable, but their information power is more powerful than any other guild in the Land of Dusk.
  - Current state : Appointing proxy [Details]
  - Management : Appointing proxy [Details]
  - Skills
1. Recall to Falcon City [Cooldown time 1 hour (free)]
  2. Observe information [Cooldown time 12 hours]

3. Collect information [Cooldown time 24 hours]

4. Manipulate information [Cooldown time 48 hours]

After looking at the management window, Sanghyuk felt like he knew what kind of an organization the Shadowline was.

'So I can't utilize the organization as I wish just because I'm the master? Oh, the skills will be upgraded as my command rate goes up so it will get better I guess.'

The recall skill was something that almost all sizable organizations had, so he didn't need to look into that, and the important skills were Observe, Collect, and Manipulate information.

"That's that done... '

Sanghyuk closed the management window and set the 'Shadow Duke of Falcon City' title to his suffix.

Then, an avatar customization window appeared in front of him.

If he set his avatar here, then he would be able to call that figure out and use it anytime.

Of course, the figure could only be manipulated to  $\pm 1.3$  times his size so he couldn't change it too drastically.

Currently, Sanghyuk's in-game avatar looked almost exactly like him in real life. Although the default character was based on the real-life figure of the user, it was customizable to an extent, so there were many cases where ugly people became handsome.

However, Sanghyuk wasn't someone that cared a lot about aesthetics, so he just set it as default.

So, his height became 183cm, and his weight was 77kg. So, he could increase his height to 230cm or decrease it down to 130cm. His weight also could be increased to 100kg or down to 55kg. Other than that, he was able to customize the length of his hair, beard, as well as their color. Not only that, even the skin color could be changed as well.

That much transformation would literally make him into another person altogether.

'I was planning to learn disguise as a basic skill if I had the time... but I think this is a hundred times better than that.'

Sanghyuk tried setting an avatar with a satisfied expression. He decreased his height slightly to 165cm and kept his weight.

Then, he lengthened his hair a little and grew some beard as well. He also made his skin a little brighter.

When he finished, he really created another user that looked very ordinary.

'Let's set this as the first one (ordinary-looking guy)... and do the rest later'

He titled the first one... 'ordinary-looking guy'.

'It would be great if there was a function to change names as well... though, it won't matter that much since no one would know my name unless I reveal it to them.'



Having transformed into 'ordinary-looking guy', Sanghyuk strolled around Falcon City and did his business. There were some users that were left in the dust when Sanghyuk changed his appearance... and they were the users of Demon Army.

They were looking for Sanghyuk since a month ago. At first, they couldn't find any traces of him at all since Sanghyuk didn't exit from Wyvern's Nest.

When Sanghyuk walked around Falcon City for the 'Five Trials of the Shadow' quest for five days, a user finally found Sanghyuk and contacted Killing Machine.

However, when Killing Machine came here, Sanghyuk had already turned into 'ordinary-looking guy'.

No matter how they searched in Falcon City, they couldn't find Sanghyuk. Sanghyuk was planning to walk around in this form for awhile other than when he was hunting.

'Disguise is nothing compared to this. Disguise skill also dissipates in battle, but... this won't get dispelled, even though there's a penalty. Great!'

Sanghyuk liked the suffix title effect of the Shadow Duke of Falcon City title the more he used it.

Thinking about various things with a cool drink in the Dusk Pavilion, Sanghyuk closed the internet window and stood up.

'With that, I've practically achieved everything I need to do in the Land of Dusk, so I guess I'll focus on conquering the Cave of Giants'.

He organized his plans. However, his judgment changed mere seconds later.

"Run towards the inner castle!"

A group of users suddenly appeared in front of the Dusk Pavilion. They were rushing towards the inner castle of Falcon City in hundreds.

"Wh, what is that?"

"Huh? Aren't they from the Lightning guild?"

"I think there's Pentakill guild too? Huh, Ping guild as well?"

The users sitting in the Dusk Pavilion commented while looking at the hundreds of users rushing towards the inner castle.

'What are they up to? Why are they suddenly... oh, yeah! Today's Bloody Monday, isn't it?'

Sanghyuk remembered something he had forgotten about until now.

Today was Monday. However, it was no ordinary Monday, it would be known as the Bloody Monday later.

There was no special meaning behind it.

It's just that on this day, blood overflowed in Falcon City, which leads to the day being called Bloody Monday. Of course, it wasn't actual 'blood', but instead light particles.

The ones rushing towards the inner castle right now should be an alliance of around 6 guilds according to Sanghyuk's knowledge. All 6 guilds were relatively large and

surprisingly, well, ‘recklessly’, they were trying to conquer Falcon City.

The inner castle of Falcon City couldn’t be accessed by users. Although some users with special quests could enter, they would leave almost immediately after they were done.

With that being the case, the inner castle was a place of admiration for the users. There was even a rumor that there were all sorts of treasures in the inner castle, so the number of users wanting to enter the inner castle increased.

Rumors became more exaggerated through each iteration and more detailed. No one confirmed its validity, so the rumors became ‘true’ with time.

The reason the six guilds combined their power was also that they thought that the rumors were true.

They believed that they would be able to take the ‘treasures’ in the inner castle for themselves if they seized it with force, thanks to the unlimited freedom in EL.

The reason they could be so reckless was also that the security NPCs of Falcon City were very weak.

When the game first began, the security guards were beings that the users couldn’t hope to surpass. However, with the users going beyond level 40, they started looking down on the security guards.

Although 1 on 1 was unsure, two users at level 40 or above would be able to fight one guard on an even footing.

There was actually a precedent where some high-level malefactors killed the guards and ran away.

After that happened, the users started looking down on the Falcon City security guards, and this was the result.

450 people, belonging to 6 guilds, all charged towards the inner castle.

They believed that they would easily be able to seize the inner castle and take the treasures within it.

'However, they would realize that it was all their delusion the moment they set foot into the inner castle. The master knight, and the Knight Commander of Falcon City, the 'Storm' Parayan, will appear and wipe the floor with them by himself. Oh yeah! Now that I think about it!'

Sanghyuk remembered something important after imagining 450 users being shredded by the human shredder.

"Today, there will be a true item party in the inner castle!"

The moment he thought that Sanghyuk started running towards the inner castle. It was too much of a waste to miss this opportunity.

# Chapter 34

## Cave of Titans (1)

When Sanghyuk arrived, the six guilds had already defeated the guards and had invaded the inner castle after breaking the gates.

Some of them had already become malefactors due to killing the guards. However, they were all prepared to become malefactors from the moment they decided to assault the inner castle. Even the users who haven't become malefactors yet had become criminals in status so they would become malefactors with just a few more evil acts.

The reason they pushed themselves so far meant that they really wanted those treasures in the inner castle. However, in fact, there was no such thing as treasures in the inner castle.

What was inside was only the frightening Typhoon Knights of Falcon City. And their Knight Commander, Parayan, was a master knight.

Master knights were level 100.

Even if NPCs are worse than users at their own level, level 100 was enormous.

Level 100 was something that the highest-ranking users would have to grind with all their effort for more than a year.

In other words, there were no users that were able to block Parayan's way.

“Who dares to cause a commotion here!”

\*Bbbbbboooooom!\*

Parayan appeared like a storm. Gripping on his beloved weapon, the Storm Spear, he charged against the maggots that crawled inside the inner castle.

\*Bbbbbbooooooom!\*

Parayan charged alone against 450 users. In fact, the Typhoon Knight Order was standing around him. The Typhoon Knights were incomparably stronger than the ordinary security guards.

The average level of the guards was 50, while the average level of the Typhoon Knights was 65. The difference was only 15, but it was a very large difference in terms of might.

However, those knights did not move at all. They only passed by the users and blocked the now-destroyed gates of the inner castle.

Their objective was to block any users from entering the inner castle. There were many users who had already followed the six guilds alliance in curiosity.

Unfortunately, they would get pulverized by the human shredder.

'Hmm, so this place is blocked by the Typhoon Knights... So this was why everyone said it was a pie in the sky in my previous life.'

Sanghyuk could not enter the inner castle. No, to be exact, he had the opportunity to enter, but he did not.

If he entered now, he would get smothered by Parayan.

Sanghyuk had an opportunity to watch Parayan fight up close. What he felt at the time was shock itself.

Almost all NPCs in EL could be hired as mercenaries. Of course, not anyone could hire anyone. Many elements came into play, such as the familiarity with that NPC, the value of that NPC, and the abilities of the user that would hire the mercenary.

Especially in the case of high-grade NPCs, the price to hire them was enormous, and the conditions of hiring them were also very difficult to fulfill, so no one could just hire them.

In that sense, the operators of the 'workshop' in his previous life were amazing.

They had hired the 'Storm' Parayan and the entire Typhoon Knight Order. At the time, users were trying to conquer a very strong named monster in the Heroic Lands, and the operators of the workshop hired Parayan and the Typhoon Knight Order and did the entire raid.

However, almost all the loot from the raid was stolen(?) by Parayan, so they did not hire mercenaries if possible after that incident.

\*Bbbbbbooom!\*

Parayan started shredding. This meant that all users would die and turn into light particles within 10 minutes.

'I think I need to go in there... '

The situation on the inside couldn't be seen at all from the outside, but the screams were very realistic.

"Aaaaagh! Save me!"

"it's a freak! A freak has appeared!"

"Everyone run. He's not someone you can win against!"

Users shouted with voices full of despair, and Sanghyuk stood on the outside while listening to them quietly.

'A way to sneak inside... a way to... oh! That's it.'

Sanghyuk suddenly thought of something good.

'The prefix effect of the Shadow Duke of Falcon City title... I have a chance with that!'

Sanghyuk was planning to make the pie in the sky fall towards him.

'Once Parayan's massacre is over... I'll invade the inner castle after erasing my presence.'

Sanghyuk slipped in among the front lines of the users that waited outside the gates of the inner castle and waited until the commotion inside the castle died out.

The situation was really easily finished. Parayan showed them what overwhelming power was as well as the realm of masters.

450 users, no, 500 users including those that slipped in with the 6 guilds couldn't even

scratch Parayan's body and were blasted to smithereens by the razor-sharp aura of wind that was emitted from his spear.

Like that, they scattered enormous quantities of light particles and turned this day into Bloody Monday.

The time Parayan needed to turn 500 users into pulp was merely around 5 minutes.

"Whoa... NPCs aren't something to be looked down upon."

"Wow, awesome! I saw that old man NPC before just walking around, but he actually possessed such an amazing power!"

"What do I need to do in order to raise familiarity with that NPC? It would be awesome if I could hire him as a mercenary."

Users all commented after watching Parayan's overwhelming show of might.

\*Swoosh.\*

The wind stopped after all users had disappeared. The 'Storm' Parayan put away his spear and shouted very angrily.

"Malefactors shall be killed! As long as I exist in Falcon City, no malefactors shall cause a commotion!"

Parayan shouted in a loud voice to the users gathered outside the inner castle before entering the castle again. Along with his exit, the Typhoon Knights had also retreated as well. However, it wasn't like the users could enter either.

At the same time the Falcon Knights receded, the Falcon guards blocked the way to the inner castle.

"Ah... such a pity. It would be awesome if I can get in there."

"We don't know if there are any treasures in the inner castle or not, but at least there will be some treasures just beyond this wall."

The reason the users said that was because the 500 users that died inside would have dropped their items.

Since the majority of them became malefactors, they would have dropped more important items in larger quantities, and those items would be piled up inside the inner castle.

items dropped on the ground would disappear within 24 hours if no one picked it up.

NPCs never touched the items belonging to users, so the drops from 500 users were just piled up inside the inner castle.

This was why it was 'pie in the sky'.

'But it will be different this time around!'

Sanghyuk was going to wait for his opportunity.

When time passed, the spectating users gradually scattered. Some users couldn't throw away their regrets and kept waiting, but there was no way for them to get inside. The gates of the inner castle may be open, but as long as the guards kept standing there, there was no way for them to get in.

No matter how greedy they were, they could not forcefully break through the guards. They just watched how 500 users shredded to bits a few hours ago, and no one was foolish enough to challenge again.

Eventually, time kept passing and the users all scattered while licking their lips in disappointment.

Darkness pervaded Falcon City, but the guards were still there. They looked as if they would keep standing there until the gates of the inner castle was fixed.

It had now been 7 hours since the 500 users were shredded to bits. With so much time passing, there were almost no users left. Only the extreme minority kept watching in regret. However, they weren't users that could do something but had nothing to do anyway as they were of low-level.

'Should I start now?'

Sanghyuk felt that the gates of the inner castle may be fixed if he kept waiting, and thought that this was the right opportunity since the skies had turned dark and there

were no people around to take an interest.

First, Sanghyuk moved the 'Shadow Duke of Falcon City' from suffix to prefix. Then, the effect of the title instantly switched between the two. His transformation was undone, and his original figure showed itself.

In that state, Sanghyuk took out the Silversword and the Moonblade and seeped into the darkness.

Thanks to the effects of the Silvermoon Fragments, Sanghyuk could seep into the darkness in even more secrecy, and he started to walk towards the inner castle quietly.

Actually, even if Sanghyuk seeped into the darkness, it didn't make sense for the guards to be unable to find him.

However... the guards protecting the gates could not find him at all.

The reason was simple. The prefix effect of the title, Shadow Duke of Falcon City – this.

Honestly, if it was Parayan, no, anyone from the Typhoon Knights, it was very likely that Sanghyuk was going to be discovered.

However, the guards were different. They were easy opponents even for Sanghyuk, so the effects of the title worked really well.

The guards didn't notice anything as Sanghyuk passed by them. And the low-level users who were still watching couldn't find him either.

Making his presence fainter worked to some extent against the users as well, and since Sanghyuk was concealing himself in darkness as well, the low-level users hadn't found him at all.

'Even though my presence was erased, I need to be cautious at least.'

Sanghyuk moved only among places where it was very dark and could enter the inner castle in 20 minutes.

'Wow!'

Exclaimed Sanghyuk after seeing the spectacle inside the inner castle.

There were piles of items. The 500 users had disappeared after leaving their items and not their corpses.

NPCs seemed as if they couldn't see these items at all, so the items were just scattered across the ground.

There was an uncountable number of magic-grade items, and sometimes, he could see rare-grade items as well. Recently, the crafting-class users had advanced forward in both quality and quantity, so the items scattered here were of considerable quality.

'Let's see, there should be a unique-grade item somewhere... '

What Sanghyuk was looking for was the 'Shadow Cloak' that the guild master of the Lightning Guild, Thunderbolt, had dropped.

Although there wasn't an article yet, Thunderbolt would write a long article in the InGamez forum across a few days, and there would be a mention of the Shadow Cloak in his writing.

'Shadow Cloak... Shadow Cloak... Oh! There it is!'

Eventually, Sanghyuk found the cloak.

It was buried under many items. Sanghyuk put the item inside his spatial expansion bag first and started taking the rare-grade items as well.

The spatial expansion bag Sanghyuk possessed had the highest expansion rate of all bags in Falcon City. And just in case, Sanghyuk had emptied his bag before coming here.

Despite that, his bag became full since there were so many items.

He couldn't even take 10% of the items here.

However, the items that he couldn't acquire were of low-quality anyway so it wouldn't matter even if he left them behind.

"This much is plenty!"

Sanghyuk judged that it wasn't worth the risk of getting found out to come back here

and take the remaining items.

Having filled his bag to the brim, he sneaked his way back outside. He had succeeded in making the pie in the sky fall to the ground.

# Chapter 35

## Cave of Titans (2)

Shadow Cloak [Unique ++]

-A cloak with the power of shadow that the rare monster Ghost Knight drops at a very low chance. It is considered more special since it's the first Shadow Cloak in existence.

[Basic stats] All stats +5(+1)

[Special stats] Concealment effect + 20(+4)%, resistance to all attributes +10(+2)%

[Special effects] › I can see in the dark (A) : Darkvision increases by a large amount.  
⟨,⟩ Hide'n'seek : Concealment effect increases. ⟨

[Item skill] Shadow Curse : Curses the target's shadow to make the opponent unable to move for one second and decrease target's movement speed by 30% for 5 seconds after that. However, named monsters and users with a higher level than the caster will only be affected by 15% for 3 seconds. [Cooldown time 1 minute]

[Bonus effect] HP +10, Intelligence +15

'This is a double plus too... I see so many plusses nowadays that I think plusses on items are natural.'

Checking the Shadow Cloak, Sanghyuk laughed. Of course, plusses on the item was a good thing.

However, it was in fact very rare for plusses on an item to take the item to a godly level.

Nowadays, the items Sanghyuk acquired were normally double plus items, and there were even some triple plus items as well, but they weren't things that were easy to acquire.

'It definitely is an item that Thunderbolt should have regrets about. This Shadow

Curse especially, isn't this considered as one of the top-tier item skills among the rankers? So it was here.'

Sanghyuk liked the Shadow Cloak a lot.

'There aren't many good things among the other things. Then... I guess I'll sell them.'

If Sanghyuk put all the items on sale in the auction, then the users that died that day would notice that someone had picked up their items.

However, there was nothing they could do just because they noticed. It was impossible to trace the auction, and it wasn't like there were any witnesses that day.

Everything was perfect.

'Well, the ones with enough money will buy their own stuff back.'

He didn't feel sorry for them at all. After all, it was due to their own greed that they became like that.

He might have felt guilty in his previous life, but in this life, he wasn't so considerate that he would feel sorry for any of them.

Having put up all the items on the auction, Sanghyuk started focusing on his last objective in the Land of Dusk; the Cave of Giants.

The Cave of Giants itself was like a public dungeon, and it was simultaneously the pathway to another continent.

'The Cave of Giants isn't an easy place to break through. Especially by myself... that will be even more difficult.'

In his previous life, Sanghyuk had cleared the Cave of Giants with 6 other high-level users of the workshop. They went as a party of 7 since the limitation on the Cave of Giants was 7, but even when they were the most powerful 7 of the workshop, they had trouble getting through.

At the time, Sanghyuk had also suffered a lot, so he remembered the Cave of Giants relatively clearly.

'If it was me of before, I would have never dared to think about going there alone, would I? However, I can do it right now!'

Sanghyuk was trying to clear the Cave of Giants solo when other people wouldn't even dare to try even with a full party of 7.

He put on the Shadow Cloak and stood up from his seat.

His preparations were almost done.

What was left now was to challenge.



The Cave of Giants was split into four floors.

The 1st underground floor was the floor of ogres. Ogres were considerably strong monsters, albeit not as much as wyverns.

To rank them, it would be around the 2nd or 3rd strongest beings in the Land of Dusk.

The twin-headed ogre at the doorway to the 2nd underground floor was a pseudo-named monster, and he might fail if he made a slight mistake since its attack power was very high.

Even a full party of 7 with all the members at level 45 might fail if they have no senses for battle, or take the wrong composing members, or if they had bad equipment.

Going beyond the twin-headed ogre and into the 2nd floor, large stone golems would meet the users. Stone golems were almost on par with wyverns.

Stone golems had very high defense power so users couldn't advance if they lacked damage dealing power. The last stone golem of the 2nd floor, mithril golem, was a pseudo-named monster like the twin-headed ogre and had an even higher defense than stone golems.

According to Sanghyuk's memory, the majority of users despaired because they couldn't get past the mithril golem.

Going past the 2nd floor and to the 3rd floor, this time, it wasn't the monsters but

various traps and confusing mazes that stumped the users.

However, this was easily conquered once information about this floor spread around. The monsters appearing on the 3rd floor were giant skeleton soldiers, and they were even weaker than ogres.

There wasn't a pseudo-named monster blocking the way to the 4th floor either.

Going past the 3rd floor was the fourth and final floor.

Unlike the previous three floors, the fourth floor was very short and simple corridor. There were no normal monsters either and just a few traps.

Instead, the one that blocked the exit on the 4th floor... was quite the thing.

Special named monster 'Sky Giant'.

Actually, there weren't that many named-tier giant-type monsters. The famous ones were 'Lava Giant' in the Heroic Lands and the 'Brilliance Giant' from the Solar Continent, and they were bosses that boasted insane difficulty, so users had to raise their characters for around two years before they dared to challenge those two.

Named-tier giant-type monsters all had incredibly high difficulty, and the reason was a common feature among all of them.

'Endurance of the Giant'

The effects of this ability that made the users call them 'disgusting giants', decreased all damage dealt to them by 30%, and at the same time, recover half of the decreased damage as health.

In other words, the damage was practically reduced by 45%.

Thanks to this passive ability possessed by giants, the users always lacked damage when they fought against named-tier giant monsters. Not only that, named-tier giant monsters all had frightening attack power and insane HP.

Their defense was considerably lower than named monsters of similar level, but that didn't show much due to the Endurance of the Giant.

In the users' perspective, such a passive ability attached to a monster was just hellish.

With that being the case, named-tier giant monsters placed 1st in in monsters that users didn't want to hunt.

It was always the named-tier giant monsters that took first when a survey was carried out through users in his previous life.

At first glance, dragon-type monsters may seem like the hardest to hunt, but anyone with experience hunting both would say the contrary.

Named-tier dragon monsters possessed a clear weakness in terms of attributes most of the time, but giant-type monsters were attribute-less, so it was impossible to find a shortcut.

Sanghyuk was challenging a mission with the difficulty of 'Insane Nightmare'. However, his expression was full of confidence. He had already challenged the Cave of Giants around 1,000 times in his previous life, so it was no wonder that was the case.

The easiest way to kill the twin-headed ogre was to focus on the two eyes on its right head to take away its sight for a brief time while severing the left head.

Once the eyesight on its right head was gone, there would be a dead angle in its vision, and the angle was much wider than when the eyes on the left head were taken away, and it would become easier to kill the other head.

Of course, this may sound simple but was difficult in practice. However, Sanghyuk wasn't so weak that he was stumped by a mere twin-headed ogre.

He broke through the 1st floor in moments and went to the 2nd floor. He also broke through the 2nd floor in a similar manner.

Then he was met with the mithril golem.

Normally, he would have been stumped here once, but Sanghyuk knew that the attribute of the mithril golem was weak towards was electricity.

This was why he easily defeated the mithril golem using the cost-3 Fusion Card 'Spear of Zeus' he had prepared beforehand.

Of course, he had to use up 14 Spears of Zeus, but the important thing was that he succeeded.

And the third floor was even easier than the two prior floors. Sanghyuk already had experience wandering on the 3rd floor hundreds of times. So, not only the traps, the maze-like paths didn't hinder him either.

He learned 'Trap technique(general)' on one of his basic skill slots in order to disarm a few of the traps, but he could just use some karma to erase them later.

Sanghyuk could arrive at the 4th floor after clearing the 3rd floor easily.

There were marking zones at the entrances of each floor, so Sanghyuk marked the 4th floor.

Later, there would be high-level users who acted as 'marking busses' and help low-level users mark these places for money, but that was much later into the future.

Not to mention marking busses, no one had even broken through the 1st floor yet.

\*Shhhhhh, flash!\*

After he marked the place in his marking book, he looked up ahead. The path that made him repeat the same thing again in his previous life to the point of vomiting had appeared in front of him.

'How much would it take this time...? At least ten times, right?'

What was fortunate was that the penalty for death differed according to time and situation.

Being killed by a monster would take 1% of total karma and restrict access for 2 hours while being killed by users would restrict access for 12 hours, but did not take any karma.

However, dying inside the dungeon was slightly different, and as long as the user wasn't killed by another user, the access restriction was only 10 minutes, and no karma was consumed. This was why it was possible to repeatedly go against a dungeon boss.

In one word, dungeons had a lower penalty to compensate for its higher difficulty. Of course, in the case of malefactors, they would lose 20% of their black karma no matter where they died in compensation for the ability to acquire black karma through killing other users.

"Twenty tries! I'll definitely do it within that number!"

Even Sanghyuk seemed to need 20 tries to defeat the Sky Giant.

It was the greatest named monster in the game right now.

Having finished marking, Sanghyuk returned to Falcon City and restocked his Fusion Cards since he used almost all of them against the mithril golem.

He had prepared a total of four types of Fusion Cards to fight against the Sky Giant, and Sanghyuk's current cost limit was 55.

Sanghyuk estimated the number of cards he would need against the Sky Giant and filled his maximum cost limit accordingly. He also didn't forget to bring some cost 0 cards.

What was left now was to just clash against the boss.

If users with a lot of raid experience were asked if there was any trick to conquering named monsters, they would all reply that the trick was to keep challenging.

Challenge and challenge again.

That was the only trick to a successful raid.

# Chapter 36

## The First Visitor (1)

The Sky Giant used a lot of skills, but excluding the ones that he didn't need to care about, there were three things he had to be careful of.

'Lightning Stomp', 'Thunderous Roar', and 'Eyes of the Dawn'.

These were the three core skills used by the Sky Giant. On top of the Sky Giant's normal attack which was deadly, the Sky Giant raid became hellish.

'The core of the Sky Giant raid is about how to deal damage while dodging its normal attacks.'

For reference, traditional tanking wasn't that effective against the Sky Giant. Being hit by its punches squarely would insta-kill any tanker if hit on the wrong spot, so the only method was to use life-saving skills or dodge-tank.

However, dodge-tanking may sound nice, but there were no users capable of doing such a thing yet.

Dodge-tanking required not only the senses of a good tanker but also high dodge stats.

Later, when information about the Sky Giant spread around to the public, there would be some people who would try to dodge-tank after equipping themselves full of dodge-stat equips, but right now, no such people existed. Of course, Sanghyuk was planning to dodge-tank regardless.

He had swiped all defensive equipment with high dodge stat as well as the accessories. He had also prepared the cost-1 buff Fusion Card, 'Blessing of Wind'.

The buff duration was 30 minutes, so one card was enough. He decided to trust his senses for the lacking bits. Dodge-tanking wasn't just done with high dodge stats.

More efficient dodge-tanking was possible with lower dodge stats depending on how the user reacted to a monster's attack.

In that sense, Sanghyuk, who knew of the Sky Giant's pattern better than anyone, had the confidence to dodge-tank.

However, leaving aside the defense, the real problem was with the offense. Shaving down the Sky Giant's insane HP was not so easy.

Normally, a 7-man party for a Sky Giant raid would be composed of four damage dealing specialists. The best combination was 5 damage dealers, one tanker, and one healer; the '5+1+1' combination, and the next best one was the '4+1+1+1' combination, composed of 4 damage dealers, one buffer, one tanker, and one healer.

Parties with 3 damage dealers, or more than one tankers or healers almost always failed in the raid.

If the Sky Giant wasn't defeated within 30 minutes of the battle, it would cast the buff 'Sky Giant's Wrath' to itself, and once that happened, all of its stats would multiply by 4.

The raid would practically become impossible.

So, they had to defeat the Sky Giant in 30 minutes flat, and to do that, they could only compose the party leaning towards the damage dealers.

All the environmental factors were against him. He had to take care of everything himself, so he naturally couldn't take care of all the damage using normal methods.

Even though Sanghyuk possessed might incomparable to other users, it was practically impossible to deal 5 people's worth of damage while also acting as a tanker and a healer.

Of course, what Sanghyuk ultimately wanted was to complete a 1-man assault force that was comparable to the maximum raid unit, '16-man assault force', but he had lots of things to do before he achieved that.

Right now, Sanghyuk was at best comparable to a 4-man unit. If that was the case, how was Sanghyuk planning to fill in his lacking damage?

Sanghyuk had one surefire method regarding this.



\*Flash!\*

When a red flash enveloped Sanghyuk, he clenched his teeth and endured. Then, he immediately threw his body to the side and started running away without looking back.

Even while he was running, the red flash seeped into his body. This red flash was called the ‘Burning Madflame Curse’.

A monster that used this skill was the pseudo-named monster ‘immortal firetiger’ that lived in the flaming caves at the southern end of the Land of Dusk.

The monster that looked like a large tiger was one that was of the fire attribute with its body burning in fire, and this monster used the Burning Madflame curse.

To be exact, the immortal firetiger used that skill just before its death as a last resort, , and to kill it required to strike its head accurately while being inflicted by the curse.

As a setting, the immortal firetiger was a monster born from the ashes of a phoenix and had what was known as the low-rank immortality. So, ordinary attacks could not kill it.

Burning Madflame Curse, the effect of this curse was to burn 10 HP every second as well as 1 karma every second.

In other words, once inflicted, it would destroy not only the user’s HP but the user’s karma as well.

The users naturally hated this curse. There was no way anyone would like their karma being shaved alive.

Once inflicted by the Burning Madflame Curse, users became able to ignore all defense-related effects and deal ‘true damage’, and through that, the immortal firetiger’s low-rank immortality was breached. Even if this was the case, there weren’t many people who were willing to risk karma being burned to hunt.

So the firetiger was an unpopular monster.

Then why was Sanghyuk suddenly here hunting these firetigers before the Sky Giant raid? And why was he suddenly running away?

The reason was simple.

Sanghyuk needed this curse.

Burning Madflame Curse... This possessed the power to nullify all defense skills. Although the price for it was quite big, it was not that big compared to what he could gain as a result.

‘With this... I can break through the Giant’s Endurance!’

The reason Sanghyuk chose this curse was to break through the Giant’s Endurance passive skill.

The Burning Madflame Curse lasted for exactly 40 minutes.

So, if he ran away from the firetiger and summoned himself in the 4th floor of the Giant’s Cave and arrived in front of the boss, the curse would have around 30 minutes left.

He had to finish the battle within 30 minutes anyway. During the time, he would lose 24,000 HP and 2,400 karma, but HP could be recovered with the cost-0 ‘Root of Recovery’ Fusion Card, and he had prepared himself for the karma loss, so he didn’t think that it was such a waste.

There were no problems since his level wouldn’t drop even if he consumed 2,400 fifteen times.

If he had to do more than 15 times, then he just had to fill up some of his karma.

Actually using an external source of buff(?) was a temporary measure. It would only be possible for two more months.

Two months later, a nameless guild would hunt a considerably strong named monster named ‘Grey Orc Lord’, in which they used an external source of buff, and it would become controversial on the internet.

Naturally, when things blew up, Raonsoft ordered the general management system

Chaos to patch it so that all external sources of buff would disappear once the user left the area.

Also, they declared that using the external buff to hunt the Grey Orc Lord was within the limits of the system.

It was quite a generous judgment, but it wasn't like they used a bug, so it was hard to punish them as well.

In any case, Sanghyuk had to break through the Sky Giant before that happened. Once the external buff was patched, he would need much more time and effort to conquer the Sky Giant by himself. No, perhaps he would fail to do it alone.

\*Pa-pa-pah.\*

Having arrived at the 4th floor of the Cave of Giants, Sanghyuk started running towards the large clearing in the cave.

His showdown with the Sky Giant, its start was the Burning Madflame Curse.

\*Bbbbbbooom!\*

The moment the Sky Giant used Lightning Stomp, Sanghyuk quickly jumped so that both of his feet weren't in contact with the ground.

Lightning Stomp made all the users standing on the ground fall down for 3 seconds and weakened them. Once hit, users could immediately become dust thanks to the chained Eyes of the Dawn skill.

\*Flash! Ziiiiiiiiin!\*

As he had expected, the Sky Giant used Eyes of the Dawn after the Lightning Stomp. The red beam of light shot out from the Sky Giant's two eyes was a strong laser that could burn everything it came to contact with, so it was very dangerous to even be brushed by it.

The Eyes of the Dawn also had its pattern, and Sanghyuk remembered those patterns, so he dodged them without much difficulty.

'Pattern D... Right-focused pattern.'

\*Pa-pa-pah\*

Sanghyuk predicted the exact pattern through the direction the giant was facing in as well as its posture and threw his body to the left accordingly.

\*Bbbbbboooom!\*

As he had expected, everything right of him was obliterated to smithereens.

Sanghyuk didn't just dodge, he also threw the Fusion Card 'Spear of Zeus' with his left hand as he dodged.

\*Flash! Bbooooom!\*

The Spear of Zeus accurately stabbed the waist of the Sky Giant.

Sanghyuk had kept dealing damage to the Sky Giant like this.

'So it's only 5 minutes left? This is no good... I lack damage.'

He tried his best to deal damage, but it seemed very insufficient to defeat the Sky Giant.

Since he wasn't dealing explosive damage while a tanker specialist was taking its agro, he was lacking in damage even after considering that he used the Burning MadFlame Curse to break through the Giant's Endurance.

The HP of the Sky Giant could be estimated through the number of veins seen on its forehead, and 6 veins could be seen right now.

This meant that the Sky Giant still had around 40% of its HP left.

'Give up and retry!'

The earlier he gave up, the better. Since his precious karma was being shaved away even at this moment, it was better to sever it by dying.

\*Fwooosh!\*

Sanghyuk didn't dodge the Sky Giant's normal attack. This meant that he was just going to die.

\*Splat!\*

Sanghyuk died immediately from a single punch. There was no pain from the death, but he didn't feel good. However, he had chosen this option in order to challenge again, so he just accepted his death.



The Sky Giant was definitely not an easy opponent.

Sanghyuk tried five consecutive times on his first day, but he gave up on all of them midway, judging that his damage wasn't enough.

He painfully realized that he lacked in damage through the five failures on his first day and judged that he should switch a Fusion Card.

Sanghyuk took out the 'Wind Shield' Fusion Card he was planning to use at critical moments such as when he was unable to dodge an attack, and put in the attack-oriented Fusion Card, 'Dark Flame Dragon'.

Actually, the reason he didn't put the Dark Flame Dragon card before despite its huge damage was that its enormous cost of 12 and the tricky conditions to use it. It was even very expensive to make as well.

However, right now, tricky usage and cost of manufacture didn't matter, and he had to raise his damage output using whatever methods possible, so he had to take away some of his cards related to survival and put it into dealing damage.

The cost of Wind Shield was 4, and he had 3 of them, so he could replace them with 1 Dark Flame Dragon card. With that, all of his insurance cards were gone.

Instead, he acquired one of the best damage-dealing card, Dark Flame Dragon. Sanghyuk took out all of the Fusion Cards he could use right now.

If even Dark Flame Dragon card didn't work, he would really have to plan from scratch.

## Fusion Card 'Dark Flame Dragon'

: It is possible to acquire one Dark Flame Dragon Card by combining low-rank darkness elemental, low-rank fire elemental, giant lizard's egg, ogre's blood, and orc berserker's heart. The moment you release the black dragon twitching in your heart... you shall acquire the power of a true berserker.

Effects : This card can only be used to yourself, and your own damage will increase by 30%. However, your defense will decrease by 30%, and 30% of your health will disappear once the buff ends.

Duration : 16 minutes [Cooldown time : 4 hours]

Card Proficiency : 0 / 250 [Proficiency Rank D]

# Chapter 37

## The First Visitor (2)

The Fusion Card, Dark Flame Dragon was like a double-edged blade.

However, Sanghyuk had to walk on a tightrope to defeat the Sky Giant.

No matter how expensive ogre's blood and orc berserker's heart were; even though he might be instantly killed by just the brush of a punch while 'Dark Flame Dragon's Berserk' was active, he had to take that risk.

One misstep would result in his death.

However, if he could do this mission, the rewards waiting for him was beyond his imagination.



\*Kuoooh!\*

The Sky Giant used Thunderous Roar continuously in an attempt to survive. However, Sanghyuk knew that this was its last struggle, so he pushed himself even further.

\*Fwoooosh! Clack!\*

Sanghyuk wrapped the Sky Giant's neck with the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip. Since the neck was so thick, it was quite hard to wrap the whip around, but this was the decisive moment, so he had to make it succeed.

'Let's end it here!'

There wasn't even one minute left until the Sky Giant's Wrath would activate. Instead, the number of veins on its forehead was also 10. This meant that it really didn't have much HP remaining.

If the Sky Giant endured Sanghyuk's final attack, then the enraged Sky Giant would

instantly crush Sanghyuk and if it couldn't then Sanghyuk would succeed the raid in his 14th try.

"Uaaaaaaah!"

\*Crunch, pi~ing! Pa-pah!\*

Sanghyuk pulled on the whip hard and jumped high using the rebound.

The Sky Giant kept using Thunderous Roar towards the surroundings. Thunderous Roar was an attack that caused a strong shockwave using sound so he may become tattered if he was caught up in it.

So, Sanghyuk moved to the safest place from the shockwave. It was on top of the Sky Giant's head.

\*Bbbooooooooom!\*

The vast subterranean clearing shook as though it would collapse soon. Of course, no matter how violent the Sky Giant acted, the clearing wouldn't actually collapse, but in any case, the last struggle from the Sky Giant was very strong.

However, that strong shockwave would only go downwards from the Sky Giant. Since Sanghyuk was already on the top of its head, he could completely escape the range of the roar.

'I need to finish it here!'

\*Flash, pzzzzzzzt! Bbbooooomo!\*

Sanghyuk threw the last Spear of Zeus card to the giant's head.

The Spear of Zeus struck directly between its eyes and exploded, and at that moment the Sky Giant's head was snapped backward, and its body swayed. However, just this wasn't enough.

And Sanghyuk knew that very well.

"This is the final strike!"

\*Griiiip, crrrrunch!\*

In midair, Sanghyuk had pulled on the Ten Millennia Goldbone whip on his right hand at the same time he threw the Spear of Zeus to pull himself forward.

\*Clang\*

And he unsheathed the Traveler's Treasure Sword!

Sanghyuk extended the Traveler's Treasure Sword forward and flew towards the head of the Sky Giant like an arrow.

\*Fwoooosh! Crrrrunch!\*

The Traveler's Treasure Sword struck directly between the eyes of the Sky Giant. The weakened sky Giant couldn't block the Traveler's Treasure Sword, and the sword eventually pierced through its skull and deep into its head.

It was a full-power sword strike from Sanghyuk who had the 'strength of the knight', so the power behind it was actually much stronger than what it seemed like.

\*Kroaaaaaaaaaaaaar\*

When the Traveler's Treasure Sword actually pierced its head, the Sky Giant roared out loudly, and its body shook.

Then, it slowly collapsed forward.

\*Thud!\*

"Wow, holy sh\*t... I've done it! I've actually done it!"

The moment the Sky Giant fell, the first words he spoke was a swear word. He had thrown his precious karma away for the last few days and failed 13 entire times.

Honestly, if he failed a few more times, he may risk a level down.

In such a situation, he succeeded in the raid just about 15 seconds before the Sky Giant entered its wrath stage, so it was hard for him to hold back his joy.

You have defeated the special named monster 'Sky Giant'.

You have hunted the first named giant monster and achieved something that no other Dimensional Traveler has yet to do. This will become your achievement and be remembered for eternity.

You have acquired the unique-grade title [First Giant Hunter].

As you have defeated the first Sky Giant, the first kill bonus will be applied, and you have acquired all 41 types of items that could be gotten from the Sky Giant.

Congratulations, the gathered karma has broken through the limit, and you have leveled up.

Sanghyuk was notified of the successful raid from the system as well.

And since he monopolized the large quantity of karma which would normally be shared among 7 people, his karma filled back up again, and his level became 46.

"Ahahahahahahaha."

You have defeated the Sky Giant and have opened a gate to a new world! Enter the fissure that appeared behind the Sky Giant!

The shock from the Sky Giant's fall created a fissure in the subterranean clearing, and it was the exit to the Land of Dusk and a gateway to a new world.

Sanghyuk quickly swept all the loot on the floor and jumped into the fissure.

\*Goooooooooh!\*

Inside the fissure, a stream was flowing and Sanghyuk moved along the twists of the pathway as if riding a waterslide.

This, also known as the 'waterslide to the mainland', was quite fun.

When he slid down for around a minute, he was ejected off a cliff and could escape the Land of Dusk. The cliff wasn't that high, and there was a lake below, so there was no danger.

\*Splash!\*

Just as he was about to feel joyous about entering the new world... a system message appeared in front of Sanghyuk's eyes.

Congratulations. You are the first Dimensional Traveler to visit the new continent. This record will remain in the world for eternity.

You have acquired the legendary-grade title 'The First Visitor'.

"Whoa! L, legendary! \*Cough\*!"

Although he did expect something, never did he imagine that it was a legendary-grade title and was surprised into coughing. He drank some water.

He exited the water quickly and checked on the legendary-grade title first.

Title – 'The First Visitor'

Grade – Legendary

Description – You are the first Dimensional Traveler to visit the new continent. The first is always special.

Effects – [Prefix: Critical hit rate increases by 25% and critical damage increases by 40% when fighting in the new continents(Hellfire Desert, Heroic Lands, Solar Continent.)] [Suffix: the amount of karma acquired in the new continents increase by 20%.] [Constant effect: > No.1(S) : All stats increase by 10%. <, > Run at the speed of light!(A) : Movement speed increases by 20%. < ]

"So OP."

The moment he checked the effects of the title, he subconsciously shouted out OP. If this wasn't overpowered, what was?

Sanghyuk had the chance to see one legendary-grade title in detail in his previous life, but this looked several times than that one.

'Who got this title in my previous life? Well, if it's this good, then it's no wonder that it wasn't revealed.'

Normally, the greater the treasure, the greater the extent of hiding it in secrecy.

There wasn't anything bad. Just the constant effect superseded most other legendary-grade titles, and the prefix and suffix effect were all optimized for battle.

Since he was here, Sanghyuk also checked the 'First Giant Hunter' title.

Title – 'First Giant Hunter'

Grade – Unique

Description – You have defeated the first named giant monster and proved your might to the world.

Effects – [Prefix: Attack power increases against named monsters] [Suffix: Critical hit rate increases against named monsters] [Constant effect: >Is the air up there different?(A) : Halve the effect of 'Giant's Endurance' against giant-type monsters.<]

'This isn't half-bad.'

The First Giant Hunter title had decent options. It didn't look like much since The First Visitor title was much better, but this was considerably good as well, strictly speaking.

'But what I want is something else.'

Having checked the two titles, Sanghyuk put his hand in the spatial expansion bag with a very expectant expression.

What he took out was a large crystal that emitted a red glow.

‘Giant Blood! This will become the core of my one man army project.’

Sanghyuk smiled and checked the information on Giant Blood once again.

### Sanguine Knowledge ‘Giant Blood’ [Unused]

: You may succeed the strong power contained in the blood of giants. You can become a little giant, transcending the limits of humans through the blood of giants.

Effects : Giant’s Endurance(S)[All damage received decreases by 30%, and 15% of the decreased damage recovers as HP.], Giant’s Strength(A)[Strength increase by 20%.], Giant’s Health(A)[Maximum HP increases by 20%.], Giant’s Resistance(A)[Resistance to all attributes increases by 10%.]

Bloodline skill : Enlarge!(S)[Momentarily increase body size by 2 times and strength increases by 100%. It will be maintained for 2 minutes, and the effect of all recovery skills will halve in the enlarged state. Cooldown time : 20 minutes]

Bonus effect : All stats increase by 3 against opponents even the slightest larger than yourself.

“This is it!”

Sanghyuk gripped his fist and nodded his head.

This was the Sanguine Knowledge he wanted.

Sanguine Knowledge was very rare, but there were at least 100 types.

And Giant Blood was one of the top three among those 100.

‘I think this is the single best one, but other people’s opinions do vary after all... ’

Sanghyuk personally thought that Giant Blood was the single best Sanguine Knowledge.

Some called the Dragon Blood, Demon Blood or Phoenix Blood the best, but in Sanghyuk’s view, Giant Blood had many better aspects about it.

The Dragon Blood was almost par, but in Sanghyuk's drawing, Giant Blood suited him much better than Dragon Blood.

'And honestly, even I would take a long time to get a Dragon Blood... Meanwhile, Giant Blood is almost guaranteed to me thanks to the Sky Giant.'

Sanghyuk judged that the Sanguine Knowledge he had to choose was Giant Blood after considering many elements.

While Dragon Blood might be better in terms of offensive power, but the Dragon Blood couldn't match Giant Blood thanks to the insane passive ability 'Giant's Endurance' in terms of defense.

Your preparations to succeed the Giant Blood was finished.

You may acquire immense strength of the giants through Giant Blood.

Will you absorb the Sanguine knowledge 'Giant Blood' into your fourth Soul Hole?  
Please decide within 5 minutes.

The system message appeared before Sanghyuk's expectant eyes.

And naturally, his choice was...

A 'YES'.

# Chapter 38

## Raking Gold (1)

This lake Sanghyuk had fallen to was called Lake Genesis. An uncountable number of users would fall into this in the future, and there will be a temporary village made by users in the future.

At that time, users would open stalls selling maps made by users or necessities for traveling in the desert.

The map they would sell was the map of the Hellfire Desert that was connected to Lake Genesis.

EL didn't provide a world map system or anything, so the users had to make maps on their own.

Fortunately, there was an allocated slot for saving maps so as long as they had a map, they could put it in their vision and adjust the transparency as well.

Of course, making a map required a basic skill named 'map creation', and it could only be made by walking around the area on foot.

Since he had a lot of time, Sanghyuk decided that he would put off making a map for later and moved towards the first village in the Hellfire desert 'Blue Oasis'.

Actually, it was incredibly difficult to find a village in the desert without any milestones.

In his previous life, the first 7 users to enter the Hellfire Desert had also taken ten entire days to discover Blue Oasis.

However, Sanghyuk broke through the extreme heat and the sudden monster appearances and arrived at Blue Oasis in just four hours.

Since Hellfire Desert was a place he had walked around for days in his previous life, it wasn't hard to find his way.

Having arrived at Blue Oasis, Sanghyuk first marked the place in his Marking Book. It was the basics for any EL user to mark the place after arriving at certain places.

The Marking Book Sanghyuk had was the highest-grade Marking Book sold in Falcon City, but there were only 15 points of marking.

Some of the special marking books that would appear later in the game would possess the ability to store more points or had special functions, but the easiest to acquire through gold alone could only store 15 spots.

Low-grade Marking Books possessed by most users could only store 4 points, so 15 was relatively high considering that.

\*Shhhh, flash!\*

Sanghyuk used a lowest-rank mana stone to mark the place before looking around. Blue Oasis was a small village that was only 1/20 the size of Falcon City.

Of course, it wasn't that Blue Oasis was small, but rather Falcon City was large, but in any case, this wasn't a city but a village, so 25 minutes was enough to look around.

Sanghyuk looked around to see if anything had changed in this life and saw that nothing had changed and headed to the bank.

Even on different continents, the four-dimensional warehouse was shared so once he called out the warehouse in front of him, the skill books and items he had gathered until now appeared before him.

‘Well, then. Should I start?’

One of the major reasons he had put in an effort to come to this place earlier than anyone was to earn a large sum of money.

‘Synthesis and enhancement... If I can monopolize this, I can earn an unimaginable sum of money!’

Monopoly and first discovery.

This was what Sanghyuk was aiming for.



Sanghyuk was leaking rumors from a few days ago with the Shadowline of Falcon City. Users always thought that rumors from NPCs were true, so no one doubted that rumor.

‘Skill books can be synthesized and enhanced.’

‘Even items can be enhanced.’

‘Enhanced skill books are incomparably better than normal skills.’

If he used the ‘Manipulate information’ skill which one of the skills he could use through the Shadowline, it was possible to make such rumors through NPCs.

Thanks to having done that, the topic about synthesis and enhancement had become a hot issue among the users.

Sanghyuk had taken out the skill books and items and went to the Synthesizer NPC at the center of the village.

Actually, he would normally have to raise his familiarity with that NPC to ‘acquainted’ in order to try conversing with him at all. And that process would require several days at least.

To request a synthesis or enhancement, he would have to raise his familiarity to ‘familiar’. This would take several more days.

However, Sanghyuk skipped all that process thanks to the privilege of the ‘Shadow Duke of Falcon City’, and could not only converse but request synthesis and enhancement as well.

“Oh traveler wandering through dimensions. What is it that you want?”

“I want to synthesize these.”

Sanghyuk took out a ‘swimming’ skill book and a ‘sprinting(non-battle)’ skill book and gave it to the synthesizer.

Synthesizing these two would result in the ‘high-speed swimming’ skill book that almost every user had in his previous life. Swimming-related skills were a must in EL, so everyone learned high-speed swimming.

Sanghyuk created around 60 high-speed swimming skill books. Then he synthesized them 1+1 to create around 20 ‘+2 high-speed swimming’, and synthesized the rest to make 20 ‘+3 high-speed swimming’.

He created 20 +3 high-speed swimming skill books from 60 unenhanced high-speed swimming skill books, and he only made them up to +3 since there was a chance of failure.

The cost of synthesis and enhancement wasn’t that expensive so users could do this in one go with enough materials and familiarity.

It was better to stop here with NPC synthesizers. More complex synthesis and enhancement were better off done by users with the same ability rather than NPCs.

Users not only had a higher probability of success, but they could also make even better products.

However, it wasn’t like he was going to use them, but that he was going to sell them, so he didn’t need to go as far as to enhance them even further.

Skill books could be enhanced with the same types of skill books, but enhancing normal items required enhancement stones. The problem was that enhancement stones could not be acquired in the Land of Dusk.

This could only be acquired in the new continents. So, even Sanghyuk wasn’t able to enhance items just yet.

However, he had prepared a lot of skill books so he could do those. Sanghyuk created around one hundred enhanced synthesized skill books. Then, he put them all inside his spatial expansion bag before recalling himself into Falcon City.

Falcon City was still as peaceful as ever. Sanghyuk had progressed into the new continent, but no one knew that fact.

If this was known then all EL-related online communities would be flipped over, but it wasn’t like Sanghyuk was planning to tell anyone.

Honestly, nothing good would come out of telling anyone. The only thing he could probably earn was some fame.

However, he would have to give up on a lot of things for just fame, so it was better off to not reveal it at all.

Having arrived at Falcon City, Sanghyuk put up just five enhanced synthesized skill books on the commissioned sales store as an appetizer.

Of course, he put them on at an insanely high price.

The margin rate was around 2,000%. No matter how cheap the basic skill books were, this was an insane profit.

However, he was the only one selling them, so the price didn't matter at all.

'I threw the bait... so I should just wait to see how fast they grab the bait?'

Sanghyuk logged out with a slight smile.

He was planning to log back in after 4 hours after sleeping for a little and eating a little as well.

After logging out, he slept for 3 hours before waking up, and then he turned on his tablet PC while eating his high-nutrition cereals with milk.

"Hmm... just as I expected."

Sanghyuk could see what kind of a wave he had caused with the bait he threw the moment he entered InGamez.

[Enhanced synthesized skill books appeared in the commissioned sales store just now!!]

[Whoa, why is it so expensive?]

[Look at that price... That's insane.]

[Wow... what's that? The rumors are actually true?]

[What the hell, skill books could really be synthesized and enhanced? Awesome!]

[Huh? One just got sold!]

[Wh, what the hell? They got sold out in an instant!]

[It's definitely the large guilds. Sheesh, they always swipe the super-rare items. Ordinary people like me could only suck on their thumbs.]

[I bought one. Get lost poor people.]

[Hey, prove it. How dare you lie.]

[Just who put it up there? How can you synthesize and enhance skill books? Just what the hell is up with this game? Why is there no information on it at all?]

[That's one of the charms of EL.]

[I call BS. It's so stifling.]

...

...

Sanghyuk could find out that the enhanced synthesized skill books were sold out within mere 10 minutes after he uploaded them.

'Wow, this is a much better reaction than I expected. Should I raise the price a little more?'

Those 5 were just bait that he put up to see the reaction. Sanghyuk still had a lot of enhanced synthesized skill books.

Sanghyuk finished his meal and took a shower before logging back into the game again. Then, he put up 5 skill books again, and he put them at an even higher price than before.

'Well, then. Let's see if even this is an insta-sell.'

Sanghyuk put up the items and waited calmly. After around 5 minutes, the five skill books all disappeared at once.

‘Wow! Awesome!’

The users reacted much more passionately than Sanghyuk had expected. This was all thanks to Sanghyuk laying the groundwork through NPCs.

Actually, some people had tried this method in Sanghyuk’s previous life as well. However, at the time, the time when the users went over to the new continent didn’t differ that drastically, and it also took quite a long time for them to find out that skill books could be synthesized and enhanced.

So, the ones who bought those enhanced synthesized skill books in Falcon City were only beginning users or were just plain stupid.

At the time, the majority of users knew that it was possible to synthesize and enhance skill books without much difficulty in the new continent, so no one bought the expensive synthesized skill books.

However, the situation was completely different right now.

There were at least two months until other users came to the new continent, and thanks to Sanghyuk’s groundwork through the Shadowline, the enhanced synthesized skill books were overhyped about.

This was like selling fresh air cans from the mountains.

Sanghyuk didn’t release all of his stock on the first day on purpose.

There was still a lot of time left, and he still had a lot of ingredient skill books left.

What was left now was to rake in the money.

“How is it? Can you analyze it?”

Chunwoong, the guild master of Skies Above Skies guild, looked at his long-time friend Taemin with a careful expression.

“First up, it says that I can’t analyze with my soul skill ‘analyze’. There are two cases when this happens... either it’s made from a technique I haven’t heard of or seen yet, or it’s just a standalone item.”

“There’s no way it’s a standalone item. Enhanced synthesized skill book... how could it possibly be a standalone item?”

“Exactly, so the conclusion is that it’s made with a technique I do not know of.”

Unlike the stereotypical passion gamer Chunwoong, Taemin enjoyed the game in another way. His specialty was to analyze games.

Naturally, he enjoyed EL in that perspective, and as a result, could acquire an extremely rare Ancient Knowledge ‘Seeker’.

“Then what, did someone really make this with a technique that we don’t know of?”

“Probably...”

“Wow... there is actually a technique that we, no, you don’t know of? You go looking for that stuff 20 hours a day... do I have to believe that there’s someone who’s even more crazy about game analysis than you?”

“The world is wide, and there are many capable people out there. Even I can’t find everything.”

“Whew... really? Then is it true that this is an amazing item?”

“It is... but I don’t think we should buy it yet.”

“Huh? Why? When I had a look at it, it was in a completely in a class of its own. I think it would definitely help a lot.”

“It will, but as I see it, there’s too much hype about it. I’m not sure about this... but I think it feels like someone’s monopolizing this technique.”

“Really? But even so, you and I know that the reality is that we have to buy the good stuff.”

“I do, but not now. Just trust me and wait a few more months... Then the price would

drop really low."

Chunwoong slowly nodded his head when he saw Taemin's expression full of confidence.

"Well, I always believe in you. Okay then. I'll at least make our guild just observe from the sidelines."

Chunwoong, the guild master of the master guild of one of the five guildlines in EL, 'Sky', had decided on that, and his decision spread to the entire 'Sky'line.

However, just because he did that didn't mean that all the guild members had to abide by it.

The four other guildlines were all buying those enhanced synthesized skill books anyway.

In the end, Sanghyuk was the victor here.

# Chapter 39

## Raking Gold (2)

Perhaps this was what it felt like to sell cans of air. Sanghyuk kept raking in gold to the point that he wondered if this was alright.

Enhanced synthesized skill books were being sold too well thanks to the low supply. It did halt for a little, but once he lowered the price a little, they would sell out like fire again.

On top of that, Sanghyuk wiped out some of the famous hunting fields in Hellfire Desert to gather enhancement stones and sold a few popular items after upgrading them to +3.

This also exploded in the users' faces.

Even though enhanced synthesized skill books were definitely good items, +3 weapons and armor was beyond that, and they would be left behind in the competition if they didn't buy them.

With that being the case, even the users of the guildline 'Sky' who were just observing when it came to skillbooks, jumped into the +3 items.

The items were sold well no matter how expensive he put them on.

The fact that the users could buy those items at 1/1,000 of the price when they went to the new continent... they didn't notice at all.

Sanghyuk kept raking in an unimaginable amount of gold for that one month.

He now had as much money as if the members of the five main guildlines in EL had saved up on money without spending at all for a few months.

Normally, the five major guildlines had 10 to 20 big and small guilds. The number of users in those guilds would total around 2,000.

That meant that Sanghyuk had gained as much money as 10,000 people saving up for a few months, within just one month.

This was how frightful monopoly was.

However, what was even more frightening was that it was still ongoing and that Sanghyuk was slowly making preparations for another business.

Sanghyuk arrived at 'Tune', the city that could be considered the largest in Hellfire Desert after Blue Oasis. This was the last part. Sanghyuk inputted the data using his basic skill 'map creation', and now possessed the map of the Hellfire Desert.

The map of Hellfire Desert was completed.

The proficiency of the map creation skill has increased.

A map was in Sanghyuk's hands... He had even learned map creation to make this.

'I can erase it now.'

As soon as the map was done, Sanghyuk used a bit of karma to erase the map creation skill.

Actually, he had learned that skill temporarily. Since his level was now 48, he had four basic skill slots.

Sanghyuk had already planned out which skills he would slot into those four.

You have deleted the basic skill 'map creation', using karma.

You have 1 empty basic skill slot.

After erasing map creation, he put the +5 enhanced synthesized skill '+5 emergency treatment'.

You have learned the basic skill '+5 emergency treatment'

You have no empty basic skill slots.

Having learned emergency treatment, Sanghyuk checked on the four basic skill he possessed.

[Skill] +6 High-speed swimming (Synthesized / Basic)

- A synthesized basic skill that could be created by synthesizing the basic skills 'swimming' and 'sprinting'. Allows for very high-speed swimming. Free swimming is allowed the more the proficiency increases.

Enhance bonus : (+2 bonus : Swimming speed increases by 10%) (+3 bonus : Submerged swimming becomes possible.) (+4 bonus : halves the endurance consumed under water.) (+5 bonus : Swimming speed increases by 30%) (+6 bonus : HP does not fall as long as the user falls into water no matter how high the user fell from.)

Cooldown time: N/A (Passive)

[Proficiency : 21]

[Skill] +5 Emergency treatment (Synthesized / Basic)

- A synthesized basic skill that could be created by synthesizing the basic skills 'first aid', and 'herbalism'. Can recover quickly through a simple surgery in a non-battle state. The treatment becomes faster as proficiency increases.

Skill effects : Recover 30% of HP through 5 minutes of simple surgery. (However, non-combat must be sustained for 5 minutes, and 10% of HP will be taken instead once the battle is initiated mid-way.)

Enhance bonus : (+2 bonus: Treatment failure penalty decreases to 5%) (+3 bonus : HP recovered when successful increases to 40%) (+4 bonus : Treatment failure penalty disappears.) (+5 bonus : 'Operation Successful' buff is given; this buff

increases HP recovery rate by 100% for 10 minutes if the treatment is successful.)

Cooldown time : 10 minutes

[Proficiency : 4]

[Skill] +8 Chained Evasion (Synthesized / Basic)

- A synthesized basic skill that could be created by synthesizing the basic skills 'evasion', 'roll', 'escape', and 'dynamic vision'. Evasion rate increases drastically for a short period of time. Cooldown time decreases as proficiency increases.

Skill effects : 20% increase in evasion rate for 4 seconds.

Enhance bonus : (+2 bonus : Skill duration increases to 5 seconds.) (+3 bonus : Evasion rate increases to 25%) (+4 bonus : Skill duration increases to 6 seconds.) (+6 bonus : Evasion rate increases to 40%) (+7 bonus : Skill duration increases to 8 seconds.) (+8 bonus : Skill duration increases to 10 seconds and evasion rate increases to 50%).

Cooldown time : 1 minutes 59 seconds.

[Proficiency : 12]

[Skill] +5 Telesight (Synthesized / Basic)

- A synthesized basic skill that could be created by synthesizing the basic skills 'scout', 'observe' and 'vision enhancement'. Allows the user to see further. Distance seen increases along with proficiency.

Skill effect : Sight range increases by 38%.

Enhance bonus : (+2 bonus : sight range increases by 48%) (+3 bonus : sight range increases by 58%) (+4 bonus : sight range increases by 68%) (+5 bonus : sight range increases by 88%).

Cooldown time : N/A (Passive)

[Proficiency : 31]

The basic skills Sanghyuk had learned were commonly classified as the top-tier synthesized basic skills.

High-speed swimming was a must thanks to the various environment of EL such as lakes rivers or even seas, and emergency treatment was a very thankful recovery skill for solo players like Sanghyuk.

Even things like telesight was a must for Sanghyuk since he had to take care of everything alone.

Lastly, chained evasion was the most popular basic skill even in Sanghyuk's previous life.

There were even rumors that one could not become a ranker without this skill. Actually, Sanghyuk didn't sell this when he sold the enhanced synthesized skill books this time.

If he sold this, then he would have profited immensely, but there was no need to sell this right now. It required one more year for the formula for the chained evasion skill book to be announced so he didn't need to sell this right now.

The ingredient skill books required for chained evasion all went into upgrading his own chained evasion skill. Thanks to that, he could enhance it up to a monstrous +8.

He destroyed around 20,000 skill books alone to create that +8 skill book, but he was still pretty satisfied.

He had consumed all the chained evasion skill books for himself, but he released some of the rest of the enhanced synthesized skills on the market. Of course, other than the ones he would use for himself, he only upgraded them to a safe +3.

"The map is now complete, so should I get ready now?"

While raking in gold for one month, he had also walked around the entirety of Hellfire Desert to create a single map. The business he was trying to do through the map... was naturally, monopoly of map selling.



“I wish to buy a summon ticket for an NPC Vendor.”

Sanghyuk spoke what he wished for in the NPC hiring center in Tune.

“The period?”

“Around four months.”

“Conditions?”

“An S-rank NPC vendor capable of evading monsters, malefactor stealing and automatic transactions while selling three items.”

“The cost of hiring an S-rank vendor that meets your requirement will be quite expensive though. Will you be fine with that?”

“The price does not matter. Oh! I do want it to be a beautiful female NPC if possible.”

“Understood.”

The NPC at the hiring center nodded after hearing Sanghyuk’s requirements and wrote something. Then, he immediately handed Sanghyuk a paper.

“Please check the cost and sign here.”

The price on the paper was incredibly expensive. Hiring NPC vendors was just expensive as a whole so hiring an S-rank NPC capable of all the conditions that Sanghyuk listed was only going to be more expensive.

However, Sanghyuk signed the paper without hesitation>

Then, the NPC in front of him gave him a summoning ticket to Sanghyuk.

“You need to summon the vendor at a place you want. It does not matter where you summon, but summoning is impossible inside a dungeon, and the location cannot be changed once summoned.”

Having acquired what he wanted, Sanghyuk immediately left Tune. Then, he opened

his Marking Book and placed a lowest-ranking mana stone on the page written ‘Lake Genesis’.

\*Shhhh, flash!\*

Having instantly moved to Lake Genesis through the Marking Book, Sanghyuk looked around and looked at the conditions again.

‘The Cave of Giants can be broken through in around one to two weeks.’

Sanghyuk looked around the forum posts in the community recently, and could see how far the top ranking users have come.

‘Is it because I released some of the items that didn’t exist in my previous life at this point...? The conquer rate is definitely quicker by 2 to 3 weeks.’

Actually, it was obvious that his doing has changed the future. He released so many enhanced synthesized skill books and enhanced items, so it would be strange if they didn’t conquer faster.

‘Let’s just install the vendor today just in case.’

NPC vendors were just street vendors. Users could become vendors themselves to sell things, but they could also hire NPCs to do it for them.

Of course, there was the cost of hiring vendors so one would lose money instead if they weren’t careful.

‘That place looks like a good choice. It was also the best place in my previous life as well. And the items that shall be sold in the store shall be...’

Sanghyuk had a look at the items piled inside his spatial expansion bag.

‘Drinks, cloaks and... the maps!’

‘Palsung cider’, that maintains its cold for 38 hours and could cool off the blazing heat of the desert as well as the cloaks that clearly had the mark of ‘East Face’, that could shield the wind and the sand, were actually just things he put them up in aim for one thing while making the vendor look like a proper one.

What Sanghyuk actually wanted to sell was the map. To be exact, it was the ‘map of Hellfire Desert’. Sanghyuk had even put that under his copyright so only he could copy it as well. In other words, only the buyers themselves could use that map.

This may sound strange at first. What if users just took a screenshot or a video recording of the map and posted it on the internet? They may think that the map could be shared off-game.

However, that only went for people who didn’t know what maps were in EL.

Maps in EL weren’t like tabloids that could be folded out to see the map, but an in-game item that could only be used through the map-specific slot.

Moreover, screenshots and video recordings didn’t work while the map was up. And to use the map properly in Hellfire Desert, the map needed to be slotted constantly and had to be used like GPS navigation systems.

If users really tried to use it like a map and zoomed out as much as possible, they would actually lose their paths in this milestone-less desert.

In other words, there weren’t many shortcuts to the maps of Hellfire Desert.

Sanghyuk was planning to sell this at a very high price.

‘No matter how expensive this is, the users have no choice but to buy this map. They’d probably come back after a few days wandering in the desert.’

Sanghyuk thought that this map would definitely sell well since he himself had experienced how hard it is to wander around the desert.

He had earned a lot of money through enhanced synthesized skill books and enhanced items. However, he still had more to sell.

Since he had completed the map and put it under his copyright, he could copy the map using a single piece of blank paper, so the cost of manufacture was practically zero.

‘I need to rake as much as possible while it’s still possible.’

Sanghyuk knew that this kind of business wouldn’t work forever, so he was planning to rake in as much gold as possible for one last time through the map.

# Chapter 40

## Start of Streaming (1)

As Sanghyuk had predicted, the first, no, second party to break through the Cave of Giants appeared in ten days.

They were the elite players of 'Rose Knights', a guild belonging to one of the five major Lines in EL, Line Red.

\*Splash splash!\*

The 7 users fell into Genesis Lake at almost the same time.

All 7 users were making a refreshed expression as though a ten-year-old problem had just been solved, and this was natural since they had challenged the Cave of Giants since a month ago, and had failed until now.

They had miraculously succeeded just now, so it was no wonder that they felt good.

They felt especially good once they imagined how many other parties would be challenging the Sky Giant right now.

"Uaaaaah! Yes! YEEESSSS!"

OonHyu, the main tanker of Rose Knights, shouted in a loud voice and trembled.

"Wow goddammit. That was one tenacious one."

"Whew, the giant would definitely have gone berserk if not for your heat bullet at the last moment, hyung."

"It was really close. But it was also thanks to your poison daggers that shaved its life away."

The super-elite damage dealers of Rose Knights, Longty, and SamZ, flattered each other.

"There, there. Let's talk once we get out of the lake."

The one that calmed their excitement was their guild master, Dark Bull.

Having left Genesis Lake, the seven users could see an NPC that stood near the lake.

"Huh? Why is an NPC here?"

"Is it an NPC that's welcoming us to the new continent?"

The 7 users approached the NPC in confusion.

"Huh? It's a vendor?"

"What the hell? Why is there a vendor here? What? Did another user summon a vendor here?"

"No way... we should be the first ones to get here. How can any other users summon a vendor here?"

"It's probably a system-installed NPC."

The 7 users each came up with their own opinions and flicked their fingers in front of the vendor.

Along with a click, the items sold by the vendor appeared in front of their eyes.

"Palsung Cider, East Face cloak... and the map of Hellfire Desert?"

"See? There are only the necessary items for traveling. This isn't something that a user had set up. What kind of a user would summon a vendor and sell maps? That doesn't make any sense."

They all thought that there was no possibility that the vendor was summoned by a user.

"But... why is the map so expensive? Isn't this too much of a rip-off?"

"Whoa? What the hell? Why is it so expensive... even Palsung Cider and East Face cloak is also expensive... this vendor is such a rip-off."

The users reacted exactly as Sanghyuk had predicted.

The reason Sanghyuk bothered to sell Palsung Cider and East Face cloak were to make them feel like the map was a rip-off.

They would soon realize that they would have to buy it after wandering around in the desert for a few hours, so his intention was to make them feel like this was done on purpose.

This was Sanghyuk's scheme to erase any traces that the vendor was a user-summoned NPC.

"Boss, don't you think we don't need this? When did we rely on maps?"

"You're right. This is too expensive. Even though only one of us need it, this price is just too much."

"Hyung, let's just go."

Dark Bull, just like the other guild members, thought that buying a map at that price was not worth it.

"Okay. Then let's depart after resting for 5 minutes. Maka, you stand up front. You have the 'pathfinding' skill, right?"

"Yes. I'll try to look for a path."

Maka replied with a very confident expression... but unfortunately, the basic skill 'pathfinding' was useless, at least in Hellfire Desert.

10 hours later.

Eventually, the users of Rose Knights could only come back to Lake Genesis. They could only come back thanks to Maka's guide, and if it weren't for Maka, it was likely that they would have wandered around the desert for even longer.

The 7 users admitted their mistake. Hellfire Desert definitely wasn't a place where they could get around without a map.

Everything was as Sanghyuk had expected.

Hellfire Desert. This was a desolate place so empty that the entire land itself could be considered a huge dungeon.

There were many necessities in order to survive, and those were what Sanghyuk had put in the vendor.

The first were the Rose Knights, but another group of users arrived at the new continent just two days later. Following them, many users started crossing over to the new continent.

All those users became Sanghyuk's customers.

They could not reject the map. In fact, later, everyone in the party bought maps and not just one. Some people tried to make a copy of the desert off-game by drawing, but since there were no landmarks in the desert, there was nothing users could do with an internet-drawn map.

No matter how expensive Sanghyuk's map of Hellfire Desert was, considering that it was the one and the only item, it definitely did its price.

With enhanced synthesized skill books, enhanced items and the map of Hellfire Desert selling like hotcakes, Sanghyuk earned an insane amount of gold, to the point that no users would be able to gather that much in their lifetime.

Of course, his profit started decreasing around a week later. Since users kept coming over to Hellfire Desert, it became difficult to profit as much as he did with enhanced synthesized skill books and enhanced items.

The ones who were raising familiarity with NPCs in Blue Oasis had discovered the existence of an NPC synthesizer and started to do what Sanghyuk did, so Sanghyuk just released a rumor through the Hiddenline. (*T/N: Shadowline will be changed to Hiddenline*)

'There's a synthesizer in Hellfire Desert, and asking the Synthesizer will allow you to synthesize or upgrade items and skills!'

With just that one rumor, selling enhanced synthesized skill books and enhanced items went bust.

The reason Sanghyuk did that was to monopolize wealth. Honestly, if he left it alone, he could have earned more gold for around a week more, but it was better to comfortably start his next business rather than make others profit.

Since it was time to seek fun with the map of Hellfire Desert, he had to throw away what he had to.



Sanghyuk had moved around too busily for around forty days selling enhanced synthesized skill books and enhanced items.

He couldn't even wash properly during this time. Like the saying, strike the iron while it's still hot, Sanghyuk attempted to rake in as much gold as possible.

'Now I got some leeway so should I do some of the things I put off for later?'

Actually, he had a lot of things he had to do. The most urgent one being how to solve the personal streaming matter.

In just a few months, LGN would start contacting a few of the top-ranking users and distribute live channels directly managed by LGN themselves. It was better to take that while it was still possible.

Later, it would become harder to acquire a live channel due to many elements and not only that, it was hard to ignore the already procured fan base of the other channels if he started later.

It was much better to acquire one of the 30 live channels in the first go.

Live channels were a goldmine. Later in the game, money gained from live channels would amount to much more than killing a difficult named monster in the game.

Through a live channel, one could not only acquire money but fame and reputation as well.

Above all, there was the one most important thing... the competition that could only

be participated by owners of live channels.

LGN always kept their live channels below 100 so acquiring a channel from them wasn't easy.

In any case, the reason Sanghyuk was attempting to try personal streaming again was an attempt to get one of the first live channels distributed by LGN.

Live channels had a completely different infrastructure than livestreaming through Pu TV.

The users who thought they did well in Dream Network games always dreamed of acquiring a live channel for themselves.

'What should I call the room title?'

Sanghyuk first pondered on what to call his room. Actually, he thought that it would be difficult to livestream thanks to many reasons before, but right now, it was different.

With his title 'Shadow Duke of Falcon City', there was no need to worry about his identity being leaked anymore. Sanghyuk had already made an avatar for streaming.

[Cave of Giants solo streaming. -BJ Gale-]

"This should be good.'

Sanghyuk turned on the streaming after writing a very clickbait-y title.

EL allowed for connections with many Dream Network streaming systems so doing a streaming from inside the game wasn't that rare.

He started the streaming, but people didn't flood in like crazy from the get-go.

Perhaps due to the provocative title though, many people started entering despite the fact that he had just started off and had no fame to his name to speak of.

[Cave of Giants solo play? What kind of agro is this?]

[I've seen a lot of other Cave of Giants streams, but most of the time, seven top-tier rankers have a hellish time... the title of this room is just a clickbait, right?]

[I call BS on solo play. BJ Gale? I bet my right hand that this bitch is under level 20.]

[He's probably trying to get some agro and grab onto some of the viewers.]

[At least he's standing at the entrance of the Cave of Giants. He's not actually going in by himself, right?]

[Of course not. He's just putting on a show. We're not leaving due to curiosity, so he's keep waiting for more viewers and will disappoint all of us.]

[Gdi, I get that this is a clickbait but I can't get out. I'm waiting for 5 more minutes. If nothing happens by then, I'm leaving.]

...

...

Many things came up on chat, but Sanghyuk did not reply at all and just checked the number of viewers at the entrance of the Cave of Giants.

'104... Well, I guess this is enough?'

It would be fine if he got enough people to rumor about him for today. It was too much of him to expect many users when he had just started.

"Then shall I start?"

\*Ssss\*

Sanghyuk shook his head lightly and walked forward. His appearance was changed to that of 'Gale's', and the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip was in his bag. In today's stream, he was just going to us the Traveler's Treasure Sword.

[Huh? He's moving. What the hell? Is he actually going in alone?]

[Gdi, wimp. He's showing off until the end.]

[He leave soon.]

[He'll only pretend to go in or get back out immediately. Didn't I say I bet my right hand on it?]

[Anyway, why is he not speaking at all?]

[What is this? A mystery concept?]

...

...

The chatting log went up fast. However, Sanghyuk did not care what the viewers did.

He just had to shut them up with his skills anyway.

Sanghyuk, no, Gale quickly entered the 1st floor of the Cave of Giants and rushed towards an ogre.

Gale dodged the ogre's attack with a quick and simplified movement and swung his sword a few times. When he did, blood gushed out from various parts of the ogre's body.

[Whoa... Ju, just what...]

[I, insane.]

[What the hell? What in the world is happening?]

[Whoaaaa!?]

...

...

The viewers who were only mocking him until now couldn't even speak properly.

And at that moment, Gale swung his sword three times again, and the three swings struck the ogre's chest, neck, and forehead respectively.

\*P-p-poof!\*

The ogre's head burst into bits like a ripe watermelon.

The chat instantly froze.

No one could say something random.

How many users in El could solo-kill an ogre in under 20 seconds? Four? Two? It was definitely countable with one hand.

And what was even more shocking was that Sanghyuk was maintaining his transformed state and he wasn't using his Ten Millennia Goldbone whip either.

All of his stats were lowered by 30%, and his main weapon was sealed.

Even in that state, Sanghyuk had killed an ogre in seconds.

'Good, I'll just go like this!'

The chat became quiet as though a storm had passed over it, but Sanghyuk didn't mind that and kept focusing in conquering the Cave of Giants.

The 100 viewers that were frozen stiff... the Cave of Giants solo raid was going to become a legend among Pu TV viewers.

# Chapter 41

## Start of Streaming (2)

[A freak appeared on Pu TV!]

[@everyone, stop doing what you're doing now. A user started soloing the Cave of Giants on Pu TV.]

[BJ Gale! Go watch, nau!]

[I'm watching right now, and I'm f\*cking speechless. The main room is full with 1,000, people and there are commentary rooms being created so go watch.]

[Is this really the same Cave of Giants that we know of? Isn't someone scamming us all?]

[Did someone hack EL? I don't think you can explain this without hacks.]

[The thing Raonsoft cares the most about is the hack. Do you think it can be? If it's a hack, then they will say something later.]

[Wow, he broke through the 2nd floor instantly too.]

[Huh? He stopped streaming on the 3rd floor.]

[What the hell? He just said that he'd start at the same time tomorrow and left.]

[So he's keeping the mystery concept until the end without talking?]

[Wow, I really do wonder if he's using a hack or not. If it's not a hack... I wonder if this even makes sense.]

[I already reported this to Raonsoft.]

[I did too, lol. There were loads of people who reported. Anyway, it looks like we'll get the results tomorrow.]

...

...

"Two hours a day... Let's start with two hours and increase it to four when the bus business is fully on."

Having finished streaming, Sanghyuk muttered in a small voice while nodding.

The third floor could be considered a business secret, so it was right to not reveal it now, and the Sky Giant on the 4th floor wasn't something even he could kill with his main weapon and 30% of his stats sealed.

'Well, then. Should I start the business?'

Sanghyuk logged out of the game and went to InGamez. Then, he put up a post.

[BJ Gale is starting bus service to the 4th floor of the Giant's Cave. I'll accept 6 per day, and those will be decided through auction. The starting price is 10,000 gold. You don't need to do anything and just watch from the back. The estimated time is around 2 hours with leeway. Your privacy will be protected and... (omitted)]

What Sanghyuk wrote was the start of the marking bus business. Although not now, other users would start it soon... Sanghyuk was planning to earn a lot of money by starting it first.

The basic price Sanghyuk had put up was very high, but that wasn't the fixed price, but an auction price that put users up in a competition, so the price would definitely climb.

The users who were currently on the 4th floor of the Cave of Giants were commonly known as the top rankers. However, Sanghyuk had just said that he would take complete newbies there with money, so the users with a lot of money but no skills could only be interested.

Also, the reason Sanghyuk started this marking bus business was not to just accept bus fees.

The more users crossed over to Hellfire Desert, the more his maps would sell.

Truly two birds with one stone.



“So it’s nothing like a hack?”

Seo Wontae asked again to confirm.

“Yes. We’ve gone through the gameplay many times, but there was no sign of any usage of hacking tools.”

“Then he actually soloed the Cave of Giants with pure skills?”

“Yes, that seems to be the case. Checking with Chaos, he is indeed the first user to clear the Cave of Giants and soloed it at the time as well. There were no problems reported during this process.”

“I know from the report, but I still can’t understand... is such a thing possible?”

“Honestly... we are very confused as well.”

“What did Chaos say?”

“It said that there is no reason to report since it’s within the range of normal gameplay. In fact, it even replied that it can’t tell us some things because of the DN Privacy Policy Laws when we tried asking some more about the user. It seems like there was no report since Chaos runs on the basic principle that it takes care of everything unless there is something especially strange.”

“Hmm, I can understand that because I made it like that, but... I guess this is the weakness of the unlimited freedom system. It definitely is hard to find the right balance. And it’s not like I can change the settings of Chaos right now...”

Chaos was the ‘God’ of the world of EL. As such, the operation team or the development team had to ask for Chaos for help if they wanted any kind of information.

Chaos took care of everything inside the game by itself and only reported very specific things to the operation team or the development team.

In Chaos's view, solo clearing the Cave of Giants wasn't something worthy of note and did not do anything about it.

"If you think about it, didn't we not make any achievements about soloing named monsters because we thought that no one would be able to? I think Chaos is running on the same logic and is not differentiating team play and solo play."

"This is an absurd error due to the appearance of a user completely beyond our imaginations. However, just because we add solo play achievements right now, it's not like Chaos would understand the difference between team play and solo play... I guess I can't help it. In the future, the operation team will watch that user from the outside and report it to me."

Seo Wontae came to a decision. Even though a groundbreaking user had appeared, changing the settings of Chaos just to observe that specific user may affect the stability of Chaos. That was something that Seo Wontae hated to do.

"Understood. Then I'll proceed that way."

The team leader of the operation team understood what he meant. He also considered the unlimited freedom system of Chaos very importantly and thought that this was the best option.



"BJ Gale, huh... so there's such a user."

The guild master of the Redline guild, Red Sun, closed the internet window he was watching right now and muttered in a small voice.

"Not everything has been revealed, but I think his abilities are tremendous. I should take him in if it's possible, right?"

Red Sun's longtime friend and vice-master of the Redline guild, Tough, also nodded his head as he spoke.

"But the problem is that he's a user we haven't seen before. Normally, we should have seen him at least once if he's one of the top-ranking users, but... I feel like this guy just dropped outta nowhere."

“I also find that strange.”

“Well, let’s look for him. If we do, we can try to recruit him... but my intuition tells me that it won’t be easy.”

“Okay, I’ll try looking for him. Oh! By the way, what are you going to do about Rose Knights? They keep ignoring orders and act however they want... are you just going to watch them?”

The Redline guild was the master guild of one of the five major guildlines in EL ‘Red’. And below them were Rose Knights.

It was true that the Redline guild was the master guild, but recently, Rose Knights had grown explosively and was slowly trying to escape their control.

“Hmm... Oh yeah, did they really kill the Sky Giant Solo?”

“Looking at the time they uploaded the screenshots and videos of the Hellfire Desert, it seems very likely...”

“But when I probed them last time, they didn’t seem to know anything about the first kill bonus, though.”

“Huh? Really?”

“Not only that, they didn’t seem to know what ‘first’ titles are.”

“Huh... what the hell...”

“Actually, as you know, the only ones that know about the first kill bonus and the first title are us and Terrículum guild. The only named monsters that gave out those titles were Harkan from the sewer dungeon and Anathan from the ancient forest dungeon. So, I thought that those Rose Knights guys would have noticed the secret since they were the first ones to kill the Sky Giant. Honestly, they helped us out a lot when he defeated Harkan. But we gulped the first kill bonus in secret... so I was worried that they might mention it in one way or the other once they found out, but there was nothing like that... Actually, I even asked them about it but they didn’t react at all. It’s so strange.”

The secret about the first kill was something that Red Sun from Redline and Kun from

Terriculum had decided to keep a secret as long as possible. And that promise between the two was well kept until now.

"That's really strange. Perhaps the first kill bonus doesn't appear from the Sky Giant?"

"That doesn't make sense. Even Harkan and Anathan has it but the Sky Giant doesn't? No way."

"That's true. Then what the hell is happening?"

"Perhaps... they might not be the first..."

Red Sun stood up from his seat with a strange expression.

"Let the Rose Knights be for the time being. I think they're going overboard since they conquered the Sky Giant four days earlier than us... but we'll show them why we're the master guild."

Just because two guilds were from the same line, the alliance couldn't be maintained forever. Red Sun was someone who had maintained large-scale alliances in games prior to EL so he knew this very well.

However, he knew a few tricks to maintaining alliances for a long time.

Competition between guilds.

The more the information was revealed about the new continent, the fiercer the competition became.



[So? How much is the bus fee?]

[I don't know exactly since BJ Gale didn't reveal anything, but one of my friends didn't make it even with 20,000 gold.]

[One of my friends didn't make it with 25,000 gold.]

[Whoa, just how much did the ones that make it actually pay?]

[Like insane amounts. There are loads of people with a lot of money but no skills. Those probably all flocked there.]

[Ah, I wish he starts quickly. When's the streaming?]

[According to him, every day from 7 in the evening till 9.]

[Uu, it's so hard waiting.]

[Rather than that, I heard that Raonsoft confirmed that he's no hack user, right? Where did that come from?]

[All answers to the reports from yesterday.]

[It's not a hack and he still soloed it... that's a freak right there.]

[I heard he doesn't belong to a guild either. It looks like all the top guilds are in an uproar trying to recruit this guy.]

...

...

Even though there was over an hour until 7 p.m., InGamez was being flooded with talks about BJ Gale.

However, BJ Gale himself, no, Sanghyuk, was gathering enhancement stones by hunting scorpions in the red scorpion zone in Hellfire Desert.

Sanghyuk started moving around 6:50.

'It's about time they've arrived at the entrance.'

Having checked the time, Sanghyuk immediately finished his hunt and recalled himself to the entrance of the Cave of Giants.

\*Flash\*

Along with a white light, Sanghyuk appeared and the six users waiting for him at the entrance greeted him with very nice expressions.

“I'll collect the fee before the stream starts. And also, I'm planning to do a stream as I said before. Of course, all of you will be hidden through the privacy filter. You all just need to watch from the back, so there won't be any leaks of personal information.”

Sanghyuk warned them once again and collected the bus fees.

The bus fees differed for all 6 people; the one who paid the most paid 44,000 gold while the one who paid the least paid 32,000 gold.

It was an insane price, but Sanghyuk collected those fees so naturally.

“I'll create a party. Well, we don't need each other's names, so I'll set identities and levels to secret.”

Sanghyuk created the party himself. Of course, the identities of the members of the party was set to secret. Since Sanghyuk was currently in ‘Gale’ appearance, it would be foolish of him to reveal his real username, Immortal.

Sanghyuk created a 7-man party with the 6 people in a moment and started streaming after warning them of a few more things.

7 p.m. When BJ Gale's stream started, viewers started flooding in like a violent wave.

The main room became full in an instant and hundreds of commentary rooms were created. The number of commentary rooms was increasing even now.

And Sanghyuk started conquering the Cave of Giants without speaking at all, just like he did the day before.

Of course, he put his customers, or ‘passengers’, safely at the back and charged at the ogres alone.

# Chapter 42

## A World where Money Earns Money (1)

“Yes, that’s it, dodge to the right. Ooh, a counterattack here? Awesome!”

A man was looking at an internet stream video while exclaiming continuously. He was even jumping up and down in his seat.

“Sangmoon. It’s annoying me so calm down already. Didn’t you say that Pu TV streams were crap until yesterday? Why are you so excited right now?”

A cold-looking man who was taking care of some papers next to the excited man frowned and spoke.

“Oh, sorry about that. But, hyung. That’s before I watched this channel and I changed my mind now.”

“Changed how?”

“Everyone’s crap except for this guy.”

“Who’s this guy?”

“What era are you from? Don’t you know BJ Gale?”

“Gale? Oh! The user soloed Cave of Giants?”

“Yes.”

“I heard the rumors, but it looks like he’s really amazing.”

“He is. He’s really amazing.”

“I think it’s the first time I saw you saying that.”

“Honestly, there are times he even exceeds my expectations. This guy is a huge

jackpot.”

“Is he that good? Someone who even the ‘Fighting God’ Typhoon of EL has acknowledged... And what about you? Do you think you can solo the Cave of Giants?”

“Mm... honestly, about fifty-fifty. I don’t think it’s impossible if I prepare many things and practice a lot. But even after that, I don’t think I can do it as cleanly as that guy there. It’s as if that guy played the Cave of Giants a thousand times already. His movements and skill usage are all perfect. It’s almost beautiful.”

“Hey, hey. Hold your horses. Don’t forget that you’re the ace of Rising guild. Honestly, this is not the time to marvel at someone else’s gameplay. You know that the other guys are all upset because we haven’t shown proper achievement in the Land of Dusk. Don’t get excited by someone else’s gameplay and just get ready to sprint in Hellfire Desert.”

“Hyung, did you forget that I’m the one who’s the most prepared? Just wait. The first named monster in Hellfire Desert will be killed by us!”

Sangmoon, no, Typhoon, replied with a very serious expression.

He had a very competitive personality.

“Yes, yes. So stop watching that channel and get ready to log in. Apparently, some of our guys found a karma singularity point in Hellfire Desert.”

Shooting Star, the guild master of Rising guild, had put in no small amount of effort, and his efforts were slowly coming to fruition.

“Karma singularity point? It’s not like you need me for that. Honestly, monsters that are slightly stronger aren’t really...”

“This one is a little peculiar. They said that there was another change other than the upgraded monsters.”

“Eh? What does that mean?”

“I don’t know the exact thing so I’ll have to log in to find out... but it seems like there’s a 2nd stage to the singularity point.”

"Whew, so we didn't know everything? But really, hyung... It doesn't look like there's much time left... can't I go after watching this? It's not just fun, but it provokes me when I look at this guy's battle style. I think I can do better in the future."

"It looks like this Gale guy is actually amazing. I heard he doesn't belong to any guild either... where did such a freak come from?"

Shooting Star tilted his head in confusion as he spoke.

Many large guilds in EL were paying attention to BJ Gale. However, the person himself was actually focusing on something completely different right now.



The 43rd quest of the large chained quest 'Merchant Guild' has been completed. Go to the merchant manager in Tune and receive the final quest.

"Phew, finally..."

When he killed the 1,000th humanoid monsters, 'Redsand Thieves', that appeared randomly in the desert, the most annoying 43rd quest in the chained quest line had been completed.

Sanghyuk had started this 'Merchant Guild' quest as soon as he arrived in Hellfire Desert.

Even after that, he still cleared some of the quests in his spare time.

The reason Sanghyuk had gathered insane sums of gold recently was also due to this Merchant Guild quest.

Actually, the Merchant Guild quest was something that three large scale guilds had combined their efforts to finish for the first time in his previous life. And that wasn't right now, but would take around 1 year into the future.

Strangely, this quest was known to the majority of the users from the get-go. The actual difficulty of the quest wasn't that hard.

It was just that the 44th and the final quest was a little too vicious; the prior 43 quests

weren't anything difficult, actually.

The reason this quest became famous was that a merchant guild could only be created through this quest. Merchant guilds were something that wasn't exactly a guild but helped users do many business or commercial transactions in the game.

Of course, it was treated differently from guilds, so merchant guilds could be created separately from guilds.

Then why were merchant guilds made? There were two major reasons.

The first was that only by creating a merchant guild, users were allowed to hire transaction-specific NPCs, that is, merchants. Unlike how other NPCs couldn't trade with users or even use the auction or the commissioned sales store, merchant NPCs could do all of those three.

They were NPCs with completely different AIs to vendor NPCs who were only capable of standing on the spot and sell stuff only.

With merchant NPCs, users no longer need to wait for good items in the auction or the commissioned sales store. Of course, hiring merchant NPCs required money, but they were the high-level workforce that did their worth, so the money spent on it wasn't that much of a waste.

The second was that only merchant guilds were allowed to open shops in villages or cities. No amount of money was enough for users to open a shop in a city or a village under their own name.

In any case, there was only the final quest left and Sanghyuk returned to Tune after finishing the 43rd quest.



"You exterminated those evil vermins so proactively... I understand how much you care about us merchants. I think I can now trust you to hire us. How is it? Are you interested?"

The 44th quest of the large scale chained quest 'Merchant Guild' has been added.

To create a merchant guild under the permission of the merchants association, a large amount of investment is needed. The merchants association is a huge group of vested interest, so a large amount of money needs to be given to the merchants association to create a merchant guild.

For reference, the merchants association has only allowed up to five merchant guilds for the Dimensional Travelers for the sake of balance. Please be warned that the opportunity may disappear if you don't hurry.

Sanghyuk finally received the 44th quest. Numerous users wanted to create merchant guilds, but 99% of them were blocked there.

It was no wonder.

The other 43 quests were child's play compared to this.

'0/8,000,000 Gold'

The amount of gold written on the quest window was 8 million gold. In other words, users would have to pay 8 million gold to the merchants association to acquire a permit. Normally, no single user would have the capability to pay this.

'Urgh... it's so expensive.'

8 million gold was something that normal users wouldn't get their hands on even if they played EL for their entire life, but Sanghyuk was different.

As a result of raking gold until now, he had around 20 million gold on him.

To express how big of a sum this was, the current gold-to-cash ratio was around 10,000 gold to 400,000 won (400USD).

In other words, 20 million gold was worth 800 million won (800,000USD)

What was more interesting was that the value of gold increased as EL's popularity rose. Honestly, there were more buyers than sellers of gold right now, so it was hard to look for a seller.

So, the 8 million gold paid by the three alliance guilds in his previous life was worth about 400 million won (400,000USD).

Using 400 million won (400,000USD) just to create a merchant guild in-game may seem like a foolish thing.

However, Sanghyuk knew very well how much wealth the 3 allied guilds had amassed later in the game.

'It's an investment for the future!'

Sanghyuk didn't hesitate and linked his (in-game) bank account immediately and paid 8 million gold in one go.

8,000,000/8,000,000 You have paid all the required gold.

"Ooh, you sir... are more capable than you look. Congratulations. You are now a full-fledged executive!"

You have created a merchant guild. The name of the merchant guild can be created in the management window. All the other functions of the merchant guild can be set in the management window as well.

Congratulations. You have created the first merchant guild as a Dimensional Traveler. This achievement will be remembered for eternity.

You have acquired the unique-grade title 'First Executive'.

Having created a merchant guild, Sanghyuk immediately hired 2 C-rank merchant NPCs through the merchant guild manager. They were NPCs who had to be paid weekly, and as C-rank NPCs, their weekly pay was only 1,500 gold.

Comparing to how B-rank received 5,000, A-rank 10,000 and S-rank 20,000, it was very cheap.

He didn't need all the functionalities of an S-rank merchant NPC right now, so a C-rank

merchant capable of simply selling and buying was enough.

'The name... let's just go with Golden Mountain.'

Golden Mountain – this reflected his will to pile mountains of gold.

Like that, the Golden Mountain merchant guild was rather... easily made.

'Let's first send one of the C-rank ones to Falcon City... and leave the other one here at Tune.'

Sanghyuk placed the two NPCs in the largest cities in the two continents respectively.

Merchant NPCs moved to their respective locations by themselves once he set them up, so it was rather comfortable. There was no need for Sanghyuk to move anywhere as he did with a vendor NPC.

The roles of the C-rank merchant NPCs in Falcon City and Tune were simple. Sanghyuk set them so that they would search the auction and the commissioned sales store and buy certain items that Sanghyuk had set when they were below a certain price.

They may not be able to hoard the items due to lack of money, so he gave them plenty, and also gave them the currently largest-available spatial expansion bag.

With this, they should be able to fill the bag without Sanghyuk having to take care of them for a day or two.

With that, Sanghyuk no longer needed to go to the commissioned sales store or the auction. The merchant NPCs hoarded the necessary items that Sanghyuk needed as long as they were below a certain price, so he only needed to visit them once a day and collect the items.

This was Golden Mountain merchant guild's first business.

Buying low-evaluated items with insane investment... Sanghyuk was planning to raise the Golden Mountain merchant guild as the big hand that manipulates the prices of items in the auction.

In his previous life, there were some invisible hands as well. And there were many items whose prices changed according to their will.

Since he knew that, Sanghyuk was trying to change it and become the one and only invisible hand.

'The low-evaluated items will keep appearing for the time being. I know most of them, so if I can monopolize those... I can gain immense profit.'

Sanghyuk had the confidence to not fail this business.

Of course, he was planning many other businesses other than just this.

And he could also automate those businesses with merchant NPCs without him having to care much about it.

The reason Sanghyuk had created a merchant guild even when he had to pay a big sum of 8 million gold... was because he needed to raise his own level while earning money without him having to do anything.

Before he went off to hunt, he checked his newly acquired title.

Title – 'First Executive'

Grade – Unique

Description – You have created the first merchant guild as a Dimensional Traveler and became its executive.

Effect – [Prefix: Receive 10% more money when selling any item to any NPC.] [Suffix: Receive 10% discount when buying from any NPC.] [Constant effect: >Wage freeze (A) : Weekly wage required to pay merchant NPCs decreases by 30% for all ranks.<]

'Good, good! Very good!'

First Executive title was a very splendid one that decreased the wage he needed to pay merchant NPCs. The monetary profit he would gain from this was unspeakable.

Having checked the title, Sanghyuk headed to Hellfire Desert in a very good mood. He had solved his monetary issues through creating the merchant guild, so he headed to the mobile secret dungeon 'Anteater dungeon' that he was aiming for since a month

ago.

# Chapter 43

## A World where Money Earns Money (2)

Anteater dungeon, it was a special dungeon that was classified as the 'mobile' secret dungeon. It was a dungeon that generated at random spots at random times so Sanghyuk didn't know the exact place either. However, he knew the conditions for it to appear.

'Desert wolf meat. This was the key to the anteater dungeon.'

Sanghyuk had filled his bag with meat from the desert wolf. He didn't know where it exactly appeared but it was very likely for a hellfire anteater to appear if he scattered around that meat.

The anteater dungeon was a dungeon that appeared inside the huge monster known as the hellfire anteater.

The hellfire anteater was a rare named monster itself and the only way to defeat this named monster was to all-clear the anteater dungeon that generated inside its body.

The reason Sanghyuk was aiming for this anteater dungeon was that this dungeon didn't just end with one such dungeon, but up to 10 of them in the span of three months.

And hellfire anteaters dropped 'high grade enhancement stones' at 99% chance so there were no better named monsters to farm these from.

Sanghyuk scattered desert wolf meat in the areas where anteater dungeons spawned frequently and waited patiently.

Since there were no specific hunting fields around here, there were no users around either.

And around 30 minutes later.

Something finally took a bait.

\*Rumble.\*

One of the sand dunes suddenly rapidly collapsed and a large hole was created. The wolf meat that Sanghyuk had placed there naturally disappeared into that hole as well.

'It's open!'

Sanghyuk ran towards that hole as soon as the hole opened without hesitation.

The way to enter the anteater dungeon was simple. Just... throw your body inside the hole.

There was a large hellfire anteater with its mouth wide open at the center so it may look like an extremely dangerous and even suicidal thing to do from the outside.

This was why many people didn't know the existence of the anteater dungeons for a long time. They always tried to kill the hellfire anteater from the outside. However, this thing absorbed every single attack directed at it, so it was once even called the invincible monster.

Of course, a user accidentally fell into the hole later and the existence of the secret dungeon was finally known.

Naturally, Sanghyuk knew about this dungeon so he could throw his body in without hesitation and enter the secret dungeon immediately.

You have entered the body of the hellfire anteater. Inside its body is a dungeon made of twisted space.

The secret dungeon 'anteater dungeon' has been discovered.

The anteater dungeon will be bound to the Dimensional Traveler 'Immortal'.

You can register up to two users in this dungeon.

Perhaps due to the dungeon being inside a monster's body, the scale wasn't that big. Of course, the fact that there is such a thing inside a monster didn't make any sense, but the system just made it make sense by saying that it was made of 'twisted space'.

Having entered the dungeon, Sanghyuk first checked the information about it. In his previous life, he had only heard and not experienced this first hand so there was a need to check on the information about this place.

Secret dungeon [Anteater Dungeon] >C rank<

- Bound to the Dimensional Traveler 'Immortal'

- Registered Dimensional Travelers [Immortal], [N/A]

: A special dungeon created inside the body of a hellfire anteater. Clearing this dungeon will defeat the rare named monster hellfire anteater.

- Bonus karma : +10%

- Dungeon clear rewards : N/A

- Dungeon all clear rewards : You may acquire a high grade enhancement stone at a very high chance and can acquire many other high quality items.

- Dungeon reactivation time after clearance : 1 minute.

- Dungeon duration : 24 hours.

- Maximum clear times : 40 times.

'It's just as I knew it.'

Sanghyuk nodded his head and made a relieved expression.

"Then shall I start quickly?"

Sanghyuk put the 'First Visitor' title on the prefix and put on the 'First Giant Hunter' in the postfix title and entered the dungeon.

The anteater dungeon was not long as Sanghyuk had expected. It was a one way path structure and was only 800m long so he just needed to kill all the enemies as he went past.

The monsters that spawned the most in the anteater dungeon were giant scorpions and desert firelizards. Monsters called sand soldiers appeared every so often and this was the trickiest thing to hunt.

However, Sanghyuk possessed the natural enemy card of the sand soldiers, 'air bomb'. A single 1-cost air bomb would instantly slay the sand soldier.

At the end of the dungeon was a pseudo-named monster, the giant zombie ant. Actually, the name actually sounded scary, but it wasn't scary at all.

18 minutes.

That was the time Sanghyuk took to clear the anteater dungeon once.

'If I get used to it more, I think I can make it under 15 minutes.'

Having finished the dungeon, Sanghyuk lightly nodded his head and smiled.

The difficulty of the anteater dungeon itself wasn't that hard.

The problem was that he had to clear it 40 times to all-clear it and defeat the hellfire anteater.

"39 more to go! Let's do this."

The most difficult thing in hunting the anteater dungeon, no, the hellfire anteater, was the time constraint.

Sanghyuk had cleared it easily thanks to his specs and his skills, but normal users would require 30 minutes at the minimum with two people.

If the anteater dungeon wasn't cleared 40 times in 24 hours, the hellfire anteater would just disappear into the sand again. Once that happened, it would all go naught. Even if a piece of desert wolf meat brought it back up, the anteater dungeon would be initialized.

Actually, the anteater dungeon wasn't such a profitable dungeon. In fact, there were extremely limited things to earn considering that it was a C rank secret dungeon.

However, all-clearing the dungeon and killing the hellfire anteater would reverse all

of that.

The rare named monster hellfire anteater was a very 'juicy' monster.

Not only did it drop a lot of items, but their qualities were also top-notch as well. Moreover, the high grade enhancement stone dropped almost all the time.

So, he had to kill the hellfire anteater by clearing the dungeon all 40 times.

12 hours and 41 minutes.

Sanghyuk grinded in that dungeon without a single moment of rest. And eventually... he killed the 40th giant zombie ant and finally defeated the hellfire anteater.

You have cleared the anteater dungeon.

The moment Sanghyuk cleared the anteater dungeon, the dungeon disappeared and Sanghyuk was ejected out, and at the same time the hellfire anteater hiding in the sand was pulled outside.

Then, it collapsed and died.

It was quite strange to see a rare named monster dying without him doing anything, but that couldn't be helped since this was the only way to kill it.

Sanghyuk took the items that were dropped from this guy and finished up.

'After a little rest... let's go again.'

Sanghyuk was planning to kill 10 consecutive hellfire anteaters and come back 3 months later and kill 10 again at that time. He was planning to monopolize the anteater dungeon before it was known to others.

Hellfire anteater, there was definitely value in monopolizing it.



Sanghyuk kept grinding for ten days straight while resting three hours a day. As a result, he could hunt all ten, one per day, hellfire anteaters. Since he killed ten of them, he would have to wait another three months for them to appear again, so he didn't need to worry about hellfire anteaters for another three months.

Like that, Sanghyuk took the ten high grade enhancement stones he had acquired from killing 10 hellfire anteaters and went to Tune.

He had one objective... to upgrade his main weapon the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip.

The reason he had gathered high grade enhancement stones was also to safely upgrade the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip.

Currently, he had only upgraded the whip to +3, the safe value, anymore, and he would risk destroying it.

Having arrived at the only renowned-tier enhancement NPC that only existed in Tune, Sanghyuk checked the high grade enhancement stone that he had got.

High grade enhancement stone [Special ingredient item]

- A stone that possesses mysterious powers. It feels like something amazing may happen with it.

[Basic effects] Upgrades an item.

[Special effect] Unlike normal enhancement stones, this contains a special energy that allows the item to not break or decrease in upgrade effect until +6.

[Bonus effect] Sometimes... it may go up by +2 and not +1 due to a 'double upgrade' effect.

With enough enhancement stones, he could upgrade to +6 safely.

'There's a bonus effect at +5... I want it to go up to at least +5... '

Item enhancements were different from skill enhancements and as the enhancement continued, the basic stats of the item increased. Of course, it wasn't like there was absolutely no enhancement effects. +5, +7, +9 and +10 had bonus effects.

Honestly, the high-grade enhancement won't allow the item to break or go lower, but the percentage of success didn't change.

From +4 onwards, the chance of a successful enhancement was extremely low, so it was likely that he wouldn't reach +5 even after spending all 10 high grade enhancement stones.

'A +5. Let's just go with that.'

In his previous life, Sanghyuk wasn't so lucky with his enhancements. He was unlucky to the point that he was called the minus hand. He broke so many weapons thanks to that.

It was to the point that the managers of the workshop forbid him to do that.

"Fuu..."

After taking a deep breath, he let the renowned-tier enhancement NPC and gave him one high grade enhancement stone and a +3 Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip.

He could rush it by giving him all 10 right up, but the unlucky events in his previous life made him refrain from doing so. Actually, he was in a completely different situation from his previous life, so there was no need to be so nervous about the outcome of the enhancement... but it was his body that reacted and not his mind.

"As-salakum in God's name!"

The enhancement NPC chanted a strange spell and attempted to upgrade.

Flash! Light spread from his hand.

'Seep!'

Sanghyuk wanted the light to seep into the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip. If the light seeped into the item the enhancement would succeed, and if the light dissipated outwards, then the enhancement would fail.

\*Paaaah, tsssss!\*

‘It worked!’

Perhaps due to his desperate wish, or just his luck, the light successfully seeped into the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip.

“It’s successful. I need more enhancement stones if you wish to continue.”

Sanghyuk gave the NPC three high grade enhancement stones this time. Since he had succeeded the roughly 50% chance of upgrading from +3 to +4, he would achieve his objective if he successfully just made it +5.

The chance of going to +5 from a +4 was known to be around 20%. It could be seen as better off compared to the 10% chance from +5 to +6, but it was definitely not a high percentage.

It was rather fortunate that renowned-tier NPCs didn’t have any penalties. Normal enhancement NPCs with a lower price had much lower percentages.

“As-salakum in God’s name!”

Once again, light could be seen, and it immediately...

\*Psssss, paah!\*

...dissipated.

“Urgh...”

Sanghyuk felt bitter but he had expected this so he kept on watching calmly.

“As-salakum in God’s name!”

The NPC continued his attempt.

\*Flash... Psssss, paah!\*

Dissipated once again...

“As-salakum in God’s name!”

\*Flash... Pssssss, paah!\*

Dissipated yet again.

Three consecutive failures.

Three high grade enhancement stones were gone in an instant. High grade enhancement stones didn’t even exist in the market right now, so it was literally priceless.

Considering how the average price of high grade enhancement stones was around 150 to 200 thousand gold, Sanghyuk had just blown up 8 million won (8,000 USD) in the span of 10 seconds.

“Fuu...”

Sanghyuk sighed deeply and calmed his heart down.

‘You knew that this wouldn’t be easy.’

Sanghyuk’s shaking didn’t make much sense considering how he had more than 10 million gold in his bank. He once again reminded himself of reality and gave the NPC the remaining 6 enhancement stones.

‘I’ll just blow it all! Let’s go!’

Sanghyuk boldly bet everything and watched for the result.

“As-salakum in God’s name!”

\*Flash\*, the light once again poured out...

\*Paaa, tssss!\*

...and properly seeped in this time.

“That’s it!”

Sanghyuk gripped his fist and nodded.

"There are five enhancement stones left. Are you going to continue?"

Looking at the +5 Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip, the NPC looked at Sanghyuk and asked.

"Yes, I wish to continue."

Sanghyuk nodded his head in reply. Since he had come here thinking that he would have to spend all 10 here, he wasn't planning to stop right now.

"As-salakum in God's name!"

The enhancement NPC kept going as Sanghyuk wished.

Light flashed three times more in his hand, but all three times, the light dissipated.

Now, there were two more high grade enhancement stones.

Although Sanghyuk wasn't pressured since he reached +5, he still wanted to make it a +6 if possible.

"As-salakum in God's name!"

However, the 9th light was different from the ones before it.

'Rainbow light! Double upgrade effect!'

Sanghyuk widened his eyes to chase the rainbow light.

Sanghyuk's eyes looked more desperate than ever before.

---

### Translator's notes

As-salakum seems to be author's random variation of the words 'As-salāmu 'alaykum', which means 'Peace be with you' or something along those lines... Which seems pretty ironic to me. Were you EVER at peace while upgrading an item? Probably not.

# Chapter 44

## War Merchant (1)

Rainbow light flashed intensely again.

This was the important part. If the light dissipated then the enhancement would fail, and if the light seeped into the item, then the enhancement would succeed.

‘Go!’

Sanghyuk shouted in his heart and watched the rainbow light. Perhaps his deepest wishes had reached the light.

\*Paaah, tssss!\*

Surprisingly, the rainbow light seeped into the Ten Millennia Goldbone whip.

“Oooooh, this is...”

At that moment, even the enhancement NPC was surprised and looked down at the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip.

Rainbow light, this meant double upgrade effect. In other words, the fact that the enhancement succeeded this time meant that the enhancement went up by two and not one.

“There’s one high grade enhancement stone left. Do you wish to continue?”

“No, I’ll stop here.”

Sanghyuk shook his head and received the +7 and the remaining high grade enhancement stone.

He immediately opened the item window and checked how stronger the +7 Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip had become.

## +7 Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip [Unique ++]

-A special weapon made by the greatest smith using the greatest materials. It looks even more special thanks to the fact that the smith's abilities were used to the maximum. Also, the value can also increase more since it's the first of its kind.

It was upgraded 7 times and acquired a mysterious force.

[Basic stats] Attack power 150(+30)(+135), Critical hit rate +20(+4)(+18)%

[Special stats] Critical hit damage + 50(+10)(+45)%, all stats +10(+2)(+9)

[Special effects] › It doesn't snap(A): Durability increases by 20 times. <,› It's better than spider strings(A): Can latch onto an opponent stronger. <,› Hit me more(B): Can present the greatest bliss towards a being with peculiar preferences. <

[Enhancement effect] › +5 effect : Critical damage +70% <

› +7 effect : Agility +70 <

[Bonus effect] (1) Movement speed +5%, (2) Agility +12.

Thanks to the enhancement, the basic stats increased and there were two special enhancement effects as well. From +2 to +5, each enhancement resulted in a +10% in overall stats, +6 20%, +7 30%, +8 40%, +9 50%, while +10 increased the overall stats by 100%.

'The enhancement effect is exactly what I wanted too.'

Critical damage and agility were both stats that Sanghyuk preferred the most.

Sanghyuk had set his items focused on critical hits. He had also raised the agility stat a lot since it was related to critical hit rate and damage.

The next thing he focused on was the strength.

Strength was directly related to attack power, so no matter how much he focused on

critical hits, if his base attack was low, there was no way his damage would be high.

Also, he invested almost no stats into defense. With agility, dodge rates would increase so he only invested in dodge-related stats in regards to defense.

The rest... he just relied on 'Giant Blood'.

Endurance of Giants. With this, he felt that it would fill his lacking defense.

'I don't think I'll switch my main weapon anytime soon... so I guess I should gather up some more enhancement stones and enhance Silvermoon fragments and then the armor? Oh, and it looks like I should get a proper armor soon.'

Until now, he invested his time more into titles than items, but it was about time he started setting up his items as well.

Actually, the entirety of the Hellfire Desert was like a huge dungeon that tested users for the final time.

Once Hellfire Desert was conquered and users started advancing into Heroic Lands or the Solar Continent, numerous contents would start appearing, so he had to set up his items before then.

'I have too many things to do. I also need to get that live channel... and it's about time I started finding the ones that betrayed me.'

Sanghyuk came up with endless streams of things he had to do. He felt like even ten of him wasn't enough. However, he had to calm down precisely at times like these.

"Phew, let's not become hasty and solve them one by one."

Sanghyuk took a deep breath and shook his head.

Being hasty would result in failures in even the things he should succeed in.

Sanghyuk wrapped the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip around his right arm and went to the auction of Tune. He went to the merchant NPC of the Golden Mountain merchant guild and collected all the items the NPC had bought.

The merchant item had bought all the items that fit in Sanghyuk's requirements so the

spatial expansion bag was filled with items.

Having collected the items, Sanghyuk immediately went to Falcon City and collected the items there as well.

He put up the items he was going to sell at the auction and before he logged out he went to Ilya, who was managing the Hiddenline in his place.



The results of Observe Information can be checked through Ilya.

The results of Collect Information can be checked through Ilya.

The results of Manipulate Information can be checked through Ilya.

Sanghyuk received the results of the organization skills he had used yesterday as soon as he met up with Ilya. The organization skills for the Hiddenline could be used once every 24 hours so it was better to use it whenever possible.

“Regarding the information about the monster you have spoken about, I have put up a report so you can just read that one. Also, we kept looking for the people you told us to look for, but it was hard to discern the correct person with just the traits you have told us. Even so, I have gathered as much information as possible and have made a report.”

Report made by Ilya could be seen through the management window so he just had to check it at his convenience.

“Finally, we keep leaking rumors about the under-evaluated items.”

Observing, collecting and manipulating information was something Sanghyuk was doing all the time. However, there was one thing that he felt a little pity about. It was that... the range of influence of the Hiddenline he had conquered was only limited to the Land of Dusk.

“Okay then. You’ve done well.”

Sanghyuk lightly patted Ilya’s shoulders.

“But Ilya. Is it really impossible to go to Hellfire Desert as I told you before?”

This was the third time he was asking that. That showed how much Sanghyuk wanted to expand his Hiddenline NPCs to the Hellfire Desert.

“As I told you before, we have our own domains. Like how they never expand here to the Land of dusk, we also do not invade their domain. You can consider it a mutual non-intervention pact.”

“You can’t break it?”

“Breaking it would mean a frontal war... but this mutual non-intervention pact was something created by the ‘Shadow King’ himself a long time ago, so even you, the master of the Hiddenline, cannot break it.”

“The Shadow King again, huh... that’s a pity.”

Sanghyuk said words of pity after hearing her words.

“If you wish to use the Hiddenline in other areas, there is one method.”

“Huh? There is?”

All conditions have been fulfilled and the hidden main quest ‘Path of the Shadow King’ begins. This quest is one of the few very important stories that flow in a different path from the main quest. This quest cannot be declined and is made up of numerous chain quests.

The darkness created behind the light. And the ones that walk that darkness... May your challenge be successful.

You have received the hidden main quest ‘Shadow King’.

‘Whoa? Hidden m, main quest?’

Sanghyuk was surprised at the sudden system message. A quest he completely didn’t expect had been generated, and a main quest at that.

Hidden main quest was something he hadn't heard of before, but main quest was still a main quest.

'There was something like this? I thought the only main quest was the revival of the Sun God... So there are many things that I don't know about.'

The first chain quest of the hidden main quest 'Shadow King', 'Hiddenline of Hellfire Desert' has been generated.

Since it was a main quest, chain quests related to it started being generated. He didn't know the specifics, but according to rumors, the most well-known main quest in his previous life, 'Revival of the Sun God' had over 30 types of chain quests.

'I don't even get how big the picture is now.'

Main quests were too big and complex so it would be hard to clear even with several months.

So, Sanghyuk thought that nothing would change immediately just because he got this quest.

'Let's just consider it as more foundation for the big picture I am drawing.'

Sanghyuk calmed his mind and spoke to Ilya again.

"So, it's up to me again?"

"Yes, we cannot help you in any way due to the non-intervention pact."

Sanghyuk nodded after hearing Ilya's words.

"Okay, then I'll look into that."

After listening to Ilya's report, he had finished everything he needed to do so he stood up. Normally, he would enjoy his time with Ilya before going away, but today, he had some things to do after logging out so he immediately left Rainbow.

## Quest – Path of the Shadow King [Divine, Hidden, Main]

– If there is light, there is darkness. If you can walk the darkness and reach the throne, then it will become a legend and myth. O seeker of the path darker than the abyss... let the blessing of the darkness be with you...

[Chain quest]

– First chain quest ‘Hiddenline of Hellfire Desert’

– ?????

– ?????

– ?????

– ?????

...

...

‘I don’t even know how big this became now.’

Having left Rainbow, Sanghyuk checked the details of the quest and thought that it was indeed like the main quest.

Having checked that as well, Sanghyuk immediately logged out.

Soon, his limit for access time would come and he was honestly tired as well.

He immediately went to sleep after logging out. He hadn’t slept for 22 hours, so he fell asleep as soon as he went to bed.



After 5 hours of deep sleep, Sanghyuk first exercised since he wasn’t able to do that recently. He took a wooden sword and went to the nearby park without many people in it to swing his sword for one hour before he ran around the district again.

After exercising, he came back home and took a shower. Then, he opened up the internet while eating high-nutrition cereal again with milk.

It was nearing 7 months since the launch of EL. The number of users was still explosively increasing, so news about how simultaneous accesses to the Dream Network was breaking records each day was being broadcasted.

Someone even coined the term 'EL syndrome'. Not to mention youths in their 20s and 30s, even some of the older generation in their 40s and 50s who had nostalgia about previous generation MMORPGs even became fans of the game.

It was even popular among women who were normally distant from games. Of course, many people were saying that this was overhyped and it was a temporary thing, but Sanghyuk knew well that those people would all disappear later.

The simultaneous log-ins to EL would keep increasing until the 3 year mark and then would repeatedly rise and fall for another 5 years.

Although the number of Koreans may not rise, the number of foreigners logging into the game would keep increasing, and some people would even immigrate to Korea to enjoy the game in comfort.

In any way, online forums and communities were increasing in scale as well as EL's popularity rose, and InGamez, the site Sanghyuk was looking at now, would also change into an EL-specific website later.

Actually, it was already showing signs of that right now.

Sanghyuk was reading down InGamez with his cereal as he always did. However, InGamez was slightly different from usual today.

'Huh? Did something happen?'

A single issue was pervading all of InGamez's forums. Considering how big InGamez was, this was incredibly rare.

Becoming curious, Sanghyuk moved to the hot topics category and checked what was happening.

Even though he had read a single article that summed up this incident, he knew exactly

what was going on.

### 'The Red Pyramid War!'

Of course, right now, the word 'war' couldn't be attached to it. To name it right now, it would rather be 'The Red Pyramid Skirmish' instead. However, Sanghyuk knew precisely what this skirmish would turn into later down the line.

That was because... the workshop guild he belonged to in his previous life was at the center of all this.

# Chapter 45

## War Merchant (2)

'This happened around this time?'

Even Sanghyuk could not be aware of all the events exactly. He may be able to remember specific moments, but his accuracy on 'when' that event happened would be much lower.

Reading down, Sanghyuk read on to see where the skirmish was at.

'If I remember correctly, it started from a worker in Gold Rush coincidentally discovering the elites of the Skies Above Skies guild moving in secrecy... '

Gold Rush had numerous workers. There were two types of workers – young children being exploited for their talent in Korea and low-wage workers in China who were being extorted of their labor.

Honestly, the talented children of Korea were at least treated like people. Since they were very talented, a carrot had to be given on top of the whip.

However, workshops in China just utilized the fact that labor wages were extremely cheap and made the workers do menial labor. Thanks to that, the number of workers was exceedingly higher on the Chinese side.

The one that discovered the elites of Skies Above Skies guild was a worker from the Chinese workshop.

'First, Skies Above Skies should have discovered a secret path that leads to the underground hunting field of the Red Pyramid... while Gold Rush should have realized that there is a secret path. They're probably probing each other at this point, right? And there were skirmishes here and there... since both of the guilds are so large, the clash itself seems to have become a hot topic.'

Reading the articles, Sanghyuk could realize what the situation was like right now.

'At this stage, no one ever knew that it wasn't just Skies Above Skies versus Gold Rush, but would become an all-out battle between Sky Line and Golden Line.'

Actually, this all began from ordinary clashes for hunting fields as it happened everywhere in EL.

Of course, this was on a much larger scale, but this didn't make it any different.

'It was fueled even more since the observers became excited... and when the fuel was about to die out... Gold Rush started putting fuel in again by finding the secret path.'

The reason why this became so big when it could have ended with a small skirmish was not that things that happened inside the game, but outside.

The ones that belonged to neither Skies Above Skies nor Gold Rush but like to gossip kept fueling the fight, and thanks to that neither Skies Above Skies nor Gold Rush could finish the fight quickly. Since there was the 'image' of the guild, they could only wait for the other to strike, and that delayed the time.

Of course, external sources of fuel didn't last that long. The external sources of fuel would all die down in 3 to 4 days anyway. However, just as the external supply of fuel became low, a new variable would occur under the Red Pyramid.

Gold Rush entered the hunting field.

Thanks to that, Skies Above Skies and Gold Rush would clash even more intensely. The underground hunting field was the Red Pyramid was what was stereotypically known as a 'juicy' hunting field, so the situation turned for the worse.

The battle of wits between Skies Above Skies who tried to monopolize the hunting field versus Gold Rush who tried to get in.

"This battle of wits lasted for around two weeks more? In any case, *that* incident would happen in around three weeks and the scale became suddenly large. After that, the war between two guilds leads to the worst outcome, the war between lines.'

Sanghyuk was also swept up in that war and fought like mad. In his previous life, he became famous to the point that he was nicknamed the 'Berserker', and that was because the number of elites of Skies Above Skies that Sanghyuk had killed reached three digits.

'Gold Rush... Gold Rush... '

Sanghyuk closed the forum and started organizing his thoughts.

"This is not an opportunity I should pass by."

This was definitely an opportunity, but as for how to use it, it required more thought.

Sanghyuk continued his thoughts even after logging into the game.

'Let's leave aside giving a big hit to Gold Rush and make the playground a little bigger.'

Sanghyuk wasn't just thinking of mere personal revenge but about how to use this opportunity as a whole.

'The guild war between Gold Rush and Skies Above Skies... This would eventually become an alliance war between Gold Line and Sky Line and would later be known as one of the four great wars of EL, the Sky-Gold war. Then the things I need to do now are... '

Sanghyuk knew too well what would be necessary once the war started.

There were some items which would explosively increase in demand, leading to prices skyrocketing. To pick a few, there would be 'Fragment of Life' and 'Holy water' which were ingredients to making potions; mana stones of various grade since they were used from recalling, marking and other things; and finally enhancement stones which would strengthen users in a short period of time.

'So there's around three weeks until the war actually begins? I have plenty of time.'

Organizing his thoughts, Sanghyuk came to a decision on what move to make.

'War merchant! Let's make another identity through this war.'

The figure Sanghyuk was thinking of was a war merchant. A merchant that bought and sold during wartime... or to be precise, merchants that acquired immense profit through wars, and in his previous life, this kind of war merchants actually did exist.

However, they only went into proper actions 5 years into the game. There was no way they would appear now when it hadn't even been a year since the launch of the game.

‘Then should I make the avatar for the war merchant?’

Sanghyuk equipped the ‘Shadow Duke of Falcon City’ title on his postfix title and opened a new slot.

There were two slots opened until now, and they were respectively ‘Ordinary-looking guy’ and ‘Gale’.

‘As for the name... let’s just go with Large Golden Mountain.’

Sanghyuk wrote the name ‘Large Golden Mountain’ on the new slot and started customizing the avatar.

He made the figure short in stature and chubbier. When he did, he got a stereotypical greedy-looking guy.

‘If I give some goat beard...’

It was the icing on the cake(?) Just with that goat beard, a perfectly miser-looking guy appeared.

‘That’s good.’

Sanghyuk immediately registered the setting on Large Golden Mountain.

A war merchant and the owner of the Golden Mountain – this was Sanghyuk’s third identity.

The fourth if he included his actual self, but in any case, he liked both the avatar and the name.

Having created the perfect avatar for a war merchant, Sanghyuk started hoarding items. He had plenty of funds right now anyway.

He had almost sold out on skill books, but the income from maps was steadily increasing. The price of the map was way too overpriced compared to the skill book, so Sanghyuk was actually earning money doing nothing.

‘For two weeks from now, I’ll hoard the items below a specific price, and after those two weeks, I’ll buy every single thing without considering the price!’

Sanghyuk set on a standard for the hoarding and entered that on two merchant NPCs.

In fact, he hired four more C-rank merchant NPCs and dispatched them to four large cities that weren't Falcon City and Tune.

Of course, he had set them up the same way.

With that, a total of six merchant NPCs would start hoarding, and with this, it was likely that normal users wouldn't even be able to see the items they want at the auction.

Systematically, merchant NPCs had higher search speeds than users, and there were 6 of them doing it concurrently, so there was no way the users could catch up.

While the map was still selling, Sanghyuk's funds were basically unlimited, so he had the confidence to hoard everything no matter how many there were.

'War without these items is impossible. That means... that this war cannot be won without me.'

There were no war merchants that were in complete control of the war even in his previous life. They only influenced the war a little.

The war merchant Sanghyuk was thinking of was a completely different existence altogether.

'If I control everything in this war... now that's what I call a true war merchant.'

He made a suspicious smile and nodded.

He was realizing what others couldn't even possibly dare imagine.



Even while hoarding the items, Sanghyuk continued his marking bus business. He even increased his scale and did it twice a day, for a total of 12 people per day and lead them to the entrance of the 4th floor of the Cave of Giants, and the reactions of the people were explosive.

The bus fee averaged around 30 thousand gold. In other words, Sanghyuk would earn

180 thousand gold per run.

Doing that twice a day, that would mean 360 thousand gold.

The price of gold was increasing by the day, and it was very hard to find people selling gold, but in any case, Sanghyuk was earning around 17.5 million won (17,500 USD) per day.

Of course, he had no plans on turning this into cash. In fact, he was using all this money to hoard war goods.

The marking bus kept running so BJ Gale's streams also continued to occur every day from 7 pm to 11 pm.

When people watched Sanghyuk's stream, they gave quite a lot of 'star candy'. Of course, Sanghyuk didn't communicate with the spectators at all, but the viewers still gave him those anyway.

The number of star candy in his inventory was also piling, but Sanghyuk just left them be. He had better things to care about and had no room to take care of those.

When Sanghyuk wasn't streaming, he was hunting black orcs in one of the top three most difficult hunting fields of Hellfire Desert, 'Blacksand Desert'.

The levels of black orcs averaged around 55, quite a high number right now.

The user known to have the highest level right now was level 49. Although One Soul users started being left behind and Double Soul users were rising, but the highest level was still taken by a One Soul user.

Of course, that was the 'official' highest level, and no one knew who the actual highest level player was.

Even Sanghyuk had leveled up to 50 already. With that, the second hell zone that started at level 40 was now over.

The next hell zone would start from level 55. However, just because he wasn't in a hell zone, it wasn't that leveling from 50 to 55 was easy.

Although it was incomparable to the third hell zone, it was still quite comparable to

the second one. He still needed around 70% of the karma he needed to level up while he was in his second hell zone. Meaning, leveling up was still pretty hard.

Of course, this was all meaningless in front of the third hell zone. Some people even went to ‘sage mode’, due to the huge amount of despair given to them by leveling.

However, Sanghyuk didn’t think about that and just focused on doing as much as possible day by day.

Black orcs too were usually monsters that were hunted in groups of three people in their late 40s to early 50s. However, Sanghyuk had soloed them like he always did.

Honestly, black orcs weren’t monsters that gave a lot of karma or dropped expensive items. However, the reason Sanghyuk was hunting these black orcs was that it was the perfect monster to raise his skill proficiency in.

This was commonly known as proficiency grinding, and through this process, Sanghyuk was currently increasing the proficiency of his basic skills and Soul skills.

Proficiency, like levels, would also slow down when it was higher, so grinding at times like these was a good choice.

\*Roaaaar!\*

Another black orc collapsed on the floor with its neck half severed and turned into a spec of light.

Your proficiency in Mid-rank Sword Mastery has become 250. Requirements to advance has been fulfilled and it has changed into High-rank Sword Mastery.

Your proficiency in ‘Elementalism [Low-rank]’ has become 250. Requirements to advance has been fulfilled and it has changed into ‘Elementalism [Mid-rank]’.

Two Soul skills reached 250 proficiency at the same time and became advanced versions.

'Phew, I finally got Elementalism to mid rank. I can finally try out proper Elemental Detonation.'

Elemental Detonation showed their true might starting from mid-rank elementals.

As a result of grinding, Sanghyuk could raise proficiency in not just elementalism but other skills as well.

'Anyway, it's about time it turns to the worst... '

Both sides tried to end the skirmish with negotiations. However, as the negotiations dragged out, the situation turned strange. Especially after Gold Rush found out what kind of hunting field the underground hunting field of Red Pyramid was. Their skirmish then turned into a war.

"Since it's almost time... it looks like it's about time Large Golden Mountain came on stage."

Muttered Sanghyuk.

The appearance of the war merchant Large Golden Mountain. This was the start of the war.

# Chapter 46

## Biting the Bullet (1)

“Taemin, it looks like we can’t avoid a guild war now.”

Chunwoong, no, Best Sword Under Heaven, of Skies Above Skies, looked at Taemin, the vice-guild master of Skies Above Skies.

“Hmm... this really isn’t good...”

Muttered Taemin with a serious expression.

“We can’t help it. Those shitty Gold Rush guys found the secret passage and pushed their way in. With that, the possibility that those shitty mainlanders will give up on the underground hunting field is completely gone. They’ll come at us with full power.”

“Well, they aren’t the ones who would pass up on such a good hunting field.”

Taemin also knew that this was inevitable. However, he still wanted to avoid a guild war if possible.

“Since it came to this, we can’t delay the slightest. We need to go on strong and pressure them.”

“Yes, you are right. If we can’t avoid it, then we need to win. I’ll put on an emergency gathering call on the guild members. The moment they declare war... let’s show them what our guild name really means.”

Taemin eventually came to a decision.

Skies Above Skies had given up on negotiations, while Gold Rush started getting greedy. In the end, the clash between these two became inevitable.

Having turned into Large Golden Mountain, Sanghyuk ordered the six NPC merchants to buy all the war inventory regardless of the price.

Since it was about time, he had to raise the price of war goods and dry any stocks of them on the market at the same time.

Of course, a few of the quick-witted merchants also hoarded war goods as Sanghyuk did. However, their scale was like dust compared to Sanghyuk's scale.

Since there weren't any big merchants in the auction right now, Sanghyuk could practically monopolize everything.

Sanghyuk bought all the items regardless of the price unless it was like, a scam or something.

Since there were so many items, he had to buy an extra-large four-dimensional storage on the bank using the unique rights possessed by executives only, and put the items there.

Sanghyuk knew that the guild war between Skies Above Skies and Gold Rush would begin in at most a week.

Until now, both sides were hitting jabs at each other, but Gold Rush would soon hit Skies Above Skies on the back of their heads.

At the time, Gold Rush ambushed the users of Skies Above Skies who were hunting in the underground hunting field. Skies Above Skies knew that the guild war would happen soon, but they didn't expect their enemy to launch a preemptive attack without even declaring guild war.

Like that, Skies Above Skies, who were suddenly struck on the back of their heads, declared war on Gold Rush, and the guild war began then.

What was interesting here was that Gold Rush's preemptive attack was a mistake. To be exact, it was some of the extremist members of Gold Rush, who were sick and tired of this battle of wits and did the deed.

Thanks to their incident, Gold Rush could only start the guild war. In this situation, apologizing to Skies Above Skies would do nothing.

The milk was spilled. If the spilled milk could not be gotten, then they had to at least protect the cup.

The time Sanghyuk, no, Large Golden Mountain, also contacted Skies Above Skies was also around this time.



Best Sword Under Heaven looked at the man in front of him with a rather absurd expression. Short stature, chubby body, as well as an evil-looking goat beard... the man who introduced himself as Large Golden Mountain looked to be a generic merchant.

“So you want us to buy those items at those prices?”

“Yes.”

“Huh, what nonsense are you talking about? If I go to the auction right now, I can get these at a tenth of the price that you’re selling... are you trying to take me for a fool here?”

“A tenth, you say... if you can get them at that price, then you just should. However, if you refuse my offer today, the prices will double next time.”

“Hey, you...”

Best Sword Under Heaven thought that Large Golden Mountain was provoking him. The one who stopped him from getting into a rage was Taemin.

“Chunwoong, don’t get excited.”

Taemin calmed Best Sword Under Heaven and had a closer look at Large Golden Mountain.

“Hoarding... was that your doing?”

Taemin, who was preparing for the guild war, was on the lookout on the auction since a few days ago, so he knew what kind of things were happening in the auction and the commissioned sales store right now.

“It’s good that there’s someone I can talk to. Yes, it was indeed my doing.”

Large Golden Mountain didn’t look ashamed at all.

“You’re not saying that you’ve gulped that enormous quantity, are you?”

“Well, it’s up to your imagination. If you find anyone that are selling these items at a lower price than I am, then you may just go to them. However, once you come to me later, the prices will definitely double.”

“You mean you have confidence in your stocks?”

Taemin slightly frowned and asked.

“If I wasn’t, I wouldn’t be here.”

“Did you never think that you were too greedy? And that you may miss both rabbits?”

“Greed, eh?... Is that what you see in me?”

“Asking for ten times the normal market price is indeed being greedy.”

“And who decides those market prices? Fufu, well, if you can get those items at your so-called ‘market price’ then go ahead.”

Despite Taemin’s warning, Large Golden Mountain didn’t bat an eyebrow.

“Of course, it’s up to you, sir Mountain, to sell at whatever price you want to, but I want you not to forget that it will be us who will be buying them.”

Taemin was saying that the customer was the one who should be prioritized. However, Large Golden Mountain just laughed.

“Well, you’re saying that it’s free for me to sell, and it’s free for you to buy, right? Well, okay, then. Then let’s call off the deal. Looks like I’ll have to go to Gold Rush’s side for this then. Oh yes. Please remind yourself that I’ve come here since I have better feelings for Skies Above Skies than the other one. Oh, and if you ever change your mind, you can just e-mail me with the address I just gave you. For your information, next time, the prices on all the items will double.”

Large Golden Mountain smiled as he answered.

At that moment, a chill ran down on Taemin’s spine. Taemin’s sharp instincts told him that he could not let Large Golden Mountain go like this.

"W, wait."

Taemin grabbed onto Sanghyuk.

"Yes, speak."

"Can't you wait an hour more? Honestly, don't you know that this is a hard thing to decide?"

"Hmm... thirty minutes. I will wait thirty minutes."

Large Golden Mountain wasn't easy to sway until the very end. He was acting as if he was in the superior position here.

[Hey, he looks like a total scammer no matter how you look at it. Why are you doing that? Just send him away. Don't tell me we can't get any items without that bastard?]

When Taemin changed his attitude, Best Sword Under Heaven chatted to him in whisper mode as if he couldn't understand him.

[Just wait a moment. Whether he's a scammer or not... it won't be too late if we send him away after we check.]

Taemin knew exactly how important the items Large Golden Mountain was selling now were. As such, he also knew that they might lose the war without being able to do anything if they couldn't keep a stable supply of those items.

If thirty minutes of investment could avoid that crisis, then he would gladly do so.

Taemin immediately ordered all guild members to go to the nearest auction of the commissioned sales store to check up on fragment of life, holy water, mana stones, and enhancement stones.

Then, he also asked Large Golden Mountain and logged out for a moment and looked for people who were selling those items.

The thirty minutes passed by in a flash.

Taemin, who logged out for a little, logged back in again. He was checking the shocking report that came from the numerous guild members he had just ordered.

[We can't get any.]

[If any of those appear on the auction or the commissioned sales store, they look very expensive but they still disappear within one second.]

[They're all gone. There isn't a single one left.]

[I shouted that I'll give them extra for thirty minutes, but all I got was a few fragments of life and one lowest-rank mana stone.]

[Since the auction takes them for an high price, everyone's uploading their stocks on there. Since it gets sold in one second, no one's trying to sell them by hand anymore.]

...

...

Taemin had already seen worrying information outside the game. When he checked what he got from his guild members... he noticed that he, no, the entire Skies Above Skies guild had met a strong enemy.

"This can't be escaped!"

Large Golden Mountain was enjoying a drink with a leisurely expression. Taemin bit his lips as he was looking at him.

[Taemin, just what's happening?]

[Chunwoong... it looks like we took the wrong step this time.]

[Huh? What do you mean?]

[That guy... is no ordinary guy.]

[What, then is it really true that he is monopolizing all the items?]

[Probably. Without that guy, I think we can only gather enough of those items for a single party, not to mention for the entire guild. Once that happens... we'll really be

doomed.]

[Whew... that's crazy. Just where did such a guy pop up from? Ah, my head hurts.]

[But if you think about it, this is instead an opportunity for us.]

[Huh? What do you mean by that?]

[We're not the only ones that need war inventory. If we could monopolize the supply even if we have to buy them at 10 times or 20 times the price, this guild war will be our victory.]

[Oho... that's true.]

[So, from now on, let's try to low-ball him a little. That's the only way.]

[Okay.]

Best Sword Under Heaven quickly nodded. He was talking about how this guy was a scammer until now, but the situation had completely reversed, so he now looked at Large Golden Mountain with a humbler expression.

Taemin's words were definitely reasonable.

War goods were indeed necessary for both sides of the war, so if they could monopolize the supply through Large Golden Mountain, then victory would be theirs.

However... that was just his, no, the guild's deluded hope.

"Huh, what? You're going to sell to Gold Rush as well?"

Taemin looked at Large Golden Mountain with an unbelievable expression.

"Why are you surprised? I would sell my items to anyone if they had the money."

"But you said that you'll do an exclusive trade with..."

"I never mentioned exclusive anywhere."

"But we are thinking of trading with just you to show trust. You should trust us too and..."

"I'm sorry, sir Taemin. Who trusts who? Fufufu, I don't believe in me. I only believe in money. You shouldn't believe me either."

Sanghyuk, having become Large Golden Mountain, really acted like a merchant greedy for money. In fact, Sanghyuk was planning to earn some money separate from his personal revenge this time.

"Even so..."

Taemin was the sort of guy who had a hard time speaking his heart out. With this, he knew who exactly was in the superior position here.

"Hm, you keep making a pitiful expression, and it's making my heart weak. Fine, then I'll give you an offer."

Large Golden Mountain judged that this was the right time and started releasing the bait.

"I'll increase the price a little. Exactly 40%. Instead... I'll increase the price by 40% on Skies Above Skies side and 400% for Gold Rush. Oh, we're not in a relationship of trust, so we'll do all this through the 'scroll of oath'. Then you can believe me right?"

Large Golden Mountain's offer was that he'd sell them at four times the price so they could pay just a little more for it.

This was an offer that only the bone-deep merchants could make. Taemin momentarily was about to burst out swearing. He really felt like he was steaming in the head in vexation.

However, he swallowed each and every one of those insults and smiled with an awkward expression. That was the only thing he could do in front of this offer which he couldn't easily accept, but could not reject either.

"Oh, since you're having a hard time in your decisions, I'll help you out a little. If you reject this offer, I'm going to propose the same thing on Gold Rush. Of course, you know that it will be 400% for you and 40% for them, right?"

Having finished his words, Large Golden Mountain looked at Taemin with an evil expression.

“Ugh...”

\*Crunch\*.

Taemin subconsciously grits his teeth, and endured it as best as he could. If he burst into a rage right now, this guild war would be their loss.

If they lost the war without being able to do anything when all the attention was on them, their guild may disintegrate to pieces, not to mention the compensation they had to pay.

Not to mention the immense post-war compensations they had to pay Gold Rush, the ‘image’ of Skies Above Skies would fall into the abyss, so the results were obvious.

In other words, Taemin had no choice but to accept this absurd offer.

‘So vicious... we took the wrong step with the wrong guy... ’

Taemin, who looked at Large Golden Mountain with a given-up expression, sighed and opened his mouth. It was his utter loss...

In the end, Skies Above Skies had to bite the bullet and went into an insulting contract with the war merchant Large Golden Mountain.

# Chapter 47

## Biting the Bullet (2)

A scroll of oath was written between Skies Above Skies and Large Golden Mountain.

The contents were simple. Skies Above Skies would buy items from the vendor NPC that Large Golden Mountain had set up and in compensation, Large Golden Mountain would sell the items at a much higher price to Gold Rush.

Skies Above Skies had to buy items that usually cost around 20~50 gold for around 280~700 gold. And these weren't things that they bought in ones, but in bulks of thousands at once, so they had to use nearly one million gold every time they bought things.

That was enough to empty the entire emergency funds they had gathered up until now.

It was to the point that Taemin said they would go bankrupt regardless of the outcome of the war.

However, the reason they were trying to hold on right now... was because Gold Rush would be in a worse situation than them.

No matter how much gold they had as a mining guild, having to pay nearly 4 million gold every time they had to buy things in order to battle should be a huge burden on them.

Of course, if they refused Large Golden Mountain's proposal due to the burden, they may collapse without being able to do any battle.

Healing potions were one thing, but an even worse problem was regarding mana stones. Once a guild war occurred, there would be various outbreaks of big and small clashes in various places, but if they could not use the marking book to return, then they would definitely lose.

As a large-scale war occurred between Skies Above Skies and Gold Rush, any stock of mana stones on the market had disappeared, so even the other users were having a

hard time, but normal users wouldn't go bust just because they couldn't use recalls for now.

Only Gold Rush would be in the ditch if they could not use recalls.

This situation was like Gold Rush deciding between a poison that would immediately kill them or kill them a week later.

Of course, there was a path to survival as well. They had to defeat the other before they died... then they would be able to steal the antidote and save themselves.

“F\*cking scammer. How dare you try to sell drugs on me.”

Kim Daeshik, one of the mid-level managers of Gold Rush, otherwise known as ‘Black Dog’, roared as though he would kill Large Golden Mountain immediately.

“I’d be rather thankful if you think I’m selling drugs... you don’t even have enough resources to catch the forces of Skies Above Skies. You should be seeing many reinforcement requests...”

Large Golden Mountain ended on a vague note and a vague smile. He didn’t come to Gold Rush immediately and waited on purpose.

About now, it was about time they were running out of war goods that they had gathered up until now.

“F\*cker...”

Black Dog was closer to a thug than a gamer. Sanghyuk, who was disguised as Large Golden Mountain right now, knew that the best.

‘This dumbass meathead is the same as ever’

The one that battered Sanghyuk the most in his previous life was also this Black Dog. He nitpicked on him on every single one of his actions.

Sanghyuk could feel a hot rage welling deep within him as soon as he met him.

“I don’t think you get the situation here... You just report to your master ‘Golgers’. Don’t

roll that stupid head of yours. It won't get you anywhere."

Sanghyuk mocked Black Dog.

If the counterpart was Black Dog and no one else, then there was no need for any respect.

"You are getting cocky."

"So what? You'll put me in place?"

Sanghyuk knew that Black Dog had nothing like a calm mind so he just mocked him outright.

He only wanted one thing.

For Black Dog to erupt.

"Yeah f\*cker! I'll put you in your place!"

\*Swoosh\*

In the end, Black Dog erupted. His subordinates, who were watching from the sidelines attempted to stop him, but Black Dog was much faster.

He swung his large saber towards Sanghyuk. The moment Black Dog emitted his killing intent towards Sanghyuk, EL's justified self-defense protocol activated.

Black Dog was now releasing grey light. Of course, this was only visible to Sanghyuk. This grey light meant that there would be no penalties for Sanghyuk to attack Black Dog due to the justified self-defense protocol.

\*Bbbooom!\*

Sanghyuk simply took a step back to dodge Black Dog's large saber.

'You really attack without looking around once you get agitated. Damned pig.'

"You dodged? C'mere, you bastard!"

“Hyung-nim!”

“Team leader!”

Black Dog’s subordinates tried to stop him, but Black Dog was faster than them this time as well.

Black Dog wildly rushed towards Sanghyuk. He was a warrior-class user, so his charge attack was actually very intimidating.

Black Dog’s subordinates judged that it would be bad if Black Dog actually blew Large Golden Mountain to pieces and had reported to their higher-ups.

However, they had to stop Black Dog from killing until someone capable of stopping him came.

Black Dog started rampaging around like a mad bull.

And his subordinates were desperately attempting to stop him.

And lastly, a completely normal bystander(?) standing next to the mad bull.

This scene was naturally merged into one, and then changed into something completely different.

Sanghyuk very narrowly dodged Black Dog’s charge attack by twisting his body sideways by half a step.

This was a Soul Skill called Marginal Stride.

To be exact, it was one of the Soul Skills Sanghyuk had acquired after Sanghyuk’s first Ancient Knowledge ‘Knight’ advanced to ‘Bladeknight’, and its effects increased dodge rates drastically for a very short amount of time (1 second), so it suited him a lot.

Like right now.

\*Fwoosh, bbbbooom!\*

Sanghyuk too easily dodged Black Dog’s charge attack. Not only that, he threw a fusion card to Black Dog as he did so, and it was ‘Spear of Zeus’.

\*Flash! Pzzzzt!\*

“Urgh!”

Thanks to Sanghyuk dodging, Black Dog could neither avoid crashing into the wall nor dodge the streak of electricity that flew at him.

Thanks to that, his HP bar was shaved off a lot along with a slight electric shock.

There was nothing like pain when HP went down. Instead, there would be just intense discomfort.

“This bastard...”

Black Dog glared at Sanghyuk while gritting his teeth.

However, no matter how intimidating the glare was, Sanghyuk, no, Large Golden Mountain’s expression was full of leisure.

“Why? You don’t feel so good being beaten up by a merchant?”

“Sir Mountain! Please stop!”

“Hyung-nim, you should stop as well!”

At that moment Black Dog’s subordinates came and blocked the path between them.

“Out of my way! I’ll definitely beat the crap out of him today!”

“Whew, a big talker. I said okay, so you can try?”

Sanghyuk didn’t stop mocking him. Whatever happened, Black Dog rampaging more would make him more advantageous.

“Thanks to this monkey, it looks like my business will become smoother’

There was a reason Sanghyuk kept provoking Black Dog, and that was to make an excuse.

The urgent one right now was Gold Rush.

Even though Gold Rush was based on a workshop, their losses would be huge if they lost this guild war.

Especially since there were ‘ranks’ in the world of workshops as well. Right now, Gold Rush was in the overwhelming lead, but there were many workshops which were waiting for an opportunity to rise to the top.

If Gold Rush lost this war, then the other workshops that were eyeing their areas may invade them.

Once that happened, even Gold Rush would be put to dire straits.

Actually, the winner of this war was Gold Rush in Sanghyuk’s previous life. And at that time, this resulted in the collapse of Skies Above Skies, no, the entire Sky Line itself.

It wasn’t like the guilds were completely destroyed, but their influence kept declining as an effect of the loss and the 5 Great Lines of EL decreased to 4.

‘Would a lot change if the outcome of the war changes?’

Actually, the change of the future wasn’t such a good thing for Sanghyuk. However, it would be foolish for him to do absolutely nothing.

It wasn’t like cooks stopped cooking in fear of bugs. And most importantly, Gold Rush was an enemy Sanghyuk had to trample on very thoroughly.

“Let me go! I’ll have that bastard...”

“Kim Daeshik, what the hell are you doing!”

With his appearance, a man shut Black Dog’s loud mouth. Sanghyuk also knew who this guy was.

‘The ‘Goldbug’ Golgers! He’s finally here.’

The ‘Goldbug’ Golgers. He was the guildmaster of Gold Rush, as well as the Line master of the Gold Line. He was also the owner of the workshops that operated in Korea and China.

He was very rich in real life as well, and even when Sanghyuk’s workshop was broken

to pieces in his previous life, this guy walked away like nothing with no punishments.

'At that time, I could only stay still since I couldn't do anything, but this time... , it will be different.'

Sanghyuk looked at Golgers with a very suspicious expression.

"You can see me later."

Golgers spoke with a very stiff expression while looking at Black Dog. Black Dog couldn't even reply and stood like a defeated dog.

"Are you Large Golden Mountain? I did see your proposal through the mail..."

Golgers looked around to see Large Golden Mountain and started talking. Befitting of his personality, he skipped all the minor talk and went straight to the topic.

"Did you think we would accept this proposal? It's 40 times. And I heard you only receive 14 times for our enemies? Do you think I'll really accept this injustice?"

Golgers looked at Large Golden Mountain with a very serious expression. He looked as if he would go crazy at any moment.

Normally, a person would take a step or two back. If the counterpart went crazy, then it would be his loss, so they would take at least a step or two back to prevent that.

However, Large Golden Mountain didn't seem to mind and nonchalantly continued his act.

"You will. Well, if you plan to surrender, then you don't have to accept it."

"What guts... If we really surrender, wouldn't it be a huge loss for you? In our view, even if we win the war after buying those items at 40 times the normal price, it won't be our win at all. We might as well give up."

"Sheesh, you talk a lot. Then you can surrender for all I care. Just open the guild menu right now, press the surrender button, compensate your enemies, embarrass yourself in public, get smashed on the head by the other workshops and let go of a few sneaky guild members that can leave at any time... Whew, you sound busy."

“ ”

Golgers momentarily couldn't react to Large Golden Mountain's words.

“And you can't take the burden of 40 times the market price when you are the one and only Gold Rush, the richest guild in EL? That's an overstatement.”

“Who says such nonsense? Gold Rush is also on the same level as other large guilds...”

“Nah, you can't do this to me. Should I recite some of Gold Rush's biggest mines? Honestly, if you run 'Abandoned mines workshop', 'Dark hill workshop', and 'Doomed ocean workshop', you get a minimum two million gold every day, no? Should I recite some of the minor ones as well? And now, now, don't deny it in front of me. If you do deny it, I'll just share the locations and the methods of grinding all on the internet.”

Golgers was at a loss after Large Golden Mountain's sudden attack. This information wasn't something he was supposed to know.

This information was only known to the important manager-level members of Gold Rush. However, the other had so easily, and precisely named the workshops.

That was a too big of a strike.

This strike decided the outcome in one go.

# Chapter 48

## The Appearance of a Legend (1)

“If I ask you to tell me where you got that information from... you won’t answer, right?”

Golgers looked at Sanghyuk with a very stiff expression.

“It might be faster for you to look into where the information leaked rather than asking me, you know?”

Of course, there was no information leak anywhere. Sanghyuk just said that to make Golgers agonized for a while.

“Okay then. I’ll give up on that. Also... the offer you gave us through the mail... I’ll accept that as well. However! You need to promise us that you will protect the secrets of our guild. Write that into the scroll of oath.”

“Oh yes, of course. I can do that since you are accepting this difficult offer... do you think I would really say that? I think you’re misunderstanding something, but the one who wants to put out the fire is not me, but you, Gold Rush. You will accept the offer if I promise to keep the secret? Hah! Some muscle pig tries to harm me from the get-go, and it looks like the guild master isn’t that better off either. I’ll change my offer. Let’s go with 50 times instead of 40. There’s also nothing like keeping secrets.”

“Th, that’s absurd-”

“Don’t interrupt me. This offer only lasts for 5 minutes. After that, it will be 60 times instead of 50 and that will also last for 5 minutes only. I guess I’ll keep increasing it until 100 times. I don’t need to tell you what happens afterward, right?”

Sanghyuk kept raining barrages of attacks. He didn’t take even a small step back. Rather, he took large steps forward.

This was true superiority.

“Hmm...”

Golgers lost this battle of wits.

"This madman will never back out."

Golgers thought that the one he was speaking to was not normal at all. Actually, there was nothing more difficult than taking someone with no common sense as an opponent.

5 minutes was definitely not a long time.

Time flew by in an instant... Golgers knew that he had to make a decision right now.

"10 seconds remaining."

He didn't count down; there was no need to.

"50 times... I accept."

In the end, Golgers admitted defeat in front of this madman.

"Okay, then. Let's go through the scroll of oath."

"Sir Large Golden Mountain... I won't ask you to put anything regarding the secrets of our guild, but wouldn't it be better for you to keep it to yourself for the time being?"

Golgers knew that asking politely worked better on madmen than threats, so he asked Sanghyuk very politely.

"Fufu, you don't have to worry about that. I'm not so foolish as to kill the golden-egg-laying goose."

'Yes, not now. And honestly, this goldbug won't flinch just because he lost a few minor grinding mines... '

Sanghyuk wasn't keeping the secret to himself because Golgers asked. He only kept his patience in order to complete a bigger picture.

Thanks to Blackie's rampage and Golger's bet, the price of the item jumped from 40 times to 50 times the market price.

There was no rip-off like this, but they could only endure it now.

Golgers kept reminding himself to endure and could barely sign the contract without going crazy.



Yet another scroll of oath was written, and yet another NPC vendor was set in place. This vendor NPC was selling the same items as the NPC vendor on Skies Above Skies side, but Gold Rush had to buy war goods through this vendor.

It was written as such on the scroll of oath, so they would be risking huge penalties if they decide to go against it.

In any case, Large Golden Mountain completed the big picture he wanted with the two contracts he made on both sides. Now, he only had to wait until the war became bigger.

Of course, watching from the sidelines while eating popcorn wasn't his style either. Another 'himself' was about to appear in his big picture.

'Let's create an avatar that's large, and very friendly-looking that is complete opposite of Large Golden Mountain.'

This time, he was going to make the avatar into a warrior and not a merchant, so he made the avatar look handsome.

When he invested around 30 minutes into it, a tall, well-built man that had a different charm from BJ Gale, appeared in front of him.

'As for the name... Blake, that will do.'

He also came up with a random name this time.

Having transformed into Blake, Sanghyuk first started getting items that would fit Blake.

Blake's abilities, according to Sanghyuk's plan, was going to be based on 'Bladeknight'. With this as the foundation, he was going to also use some fusion cards as a self-buff type ability.

So, the equipment this avatar needed was slightly different from Sanghyuk's usual equipment.

Sanghyuk bought some usable items from the auction and equipped himself. Of course, he also found a pretty good sword.

### +5 Ogreslayer [Rare ++]

- A greatsword powerful enough to bisect an ogre in half with one strike. With a length of 1.4m, it is not a large sword, and therefore possesses the characteristics of a 'hand-and-a-half sword' that could be used with one hand or both hands. This sword has slain over 1,000 ogres and possesses special traits.

This was enhanced 5 times and has acquired powerful strength.

[Basic stats] Attack power 200(+40)(+100)

[Special stats] Strength +40(+8)(+20)

[Special effect] >Ogre's strength(A) : Strength increases by 10%.Tendon slash(A) : 'Sharpness' effect is imbued into the blade and its severing ability increases.+5 effect : Strength +40<

[Bonus effect] (1) Strength +10 (2) HP +15

This was a much better sword than the Traveller's Treasure Sword that Sanghyuk had used for a while. Of course, it was difficult to compare with the Ten Millennia GOldbone Whip, but in any case, it was definitely a sword that was worth at least 10 million won (10,000 USD) on the auction.

Sanghyuk had bought hand-crafted armor that was created by the same creator as the sword and dyed it red, and finally set himself up with a few fusion cards for Blake.

Having finished equipping himself, he went to the mercenary guild of Falcon City.

In EL, being a mercenary was not a job but a qualification, and naturally, Dimensional Travelers, a.k.a. users, were also able to acquire this qualification.

With a mercenary permit, they would be able to work as mercenaries in various situations, and a guild war was one of them.

Skies Above Skies and Gold Rush were actually recruiting mercenaries as well. Of course, thanks to being ripped off on a huge scale by Large Golden Mountain, they were not able to gather large-scale forces.

However, mercenaries were a must in guild wars, so both guilds were gathering as many as they possibly could.

Sanghyuk received a C-rank mercenary tablet that anyone could receive as long as they were above level 40.

The mercenary tablet had the name 'Blake' written on it.

'I was worried about it being written as Immortal, but I guess I'm lucky. The effect of the title is much stronger than I expected.'

Thanks to receiving the mercenary tablet with the name 'Blake', he wouldn't have to worry about his identity being leaked.

Sanghyuk immediately went to Skies Above Skies with the mercenary tablet.

Gold Rush's financial prowess was much more powerful than anyone thought, so they could hold on for a long time even after Sanghyuk ripped them off with items at 50 times the market price.

They even had the power to suppress Skies Above Skies on top of that. In his previous life as well, the first one to drag the entire Line into the war was Skies Above Skies.

They were pushed back hard by Gold Rush since the beginning, so they could only borrow power from their Guild Line, and as a result, became the first Line versus Line battle.

There were two reasons for Sanghyuk's visit to Skies Above Skies.

First was, as mentioned above, to balance the sides out since Gold Rush would crush them if he wasn't there, and second was because he had the urge to smash Gold Rush himself, so he wanted to vent his frustration a little.

“A running guarantee? Such a thing is possible for mercenaries?”

Chunwoong tilted his head and asked Taemin.

“What’s impossible when there’s the scroll of oath? It’s just that... no one wanted such a contract until now.”

“That’s true; even I won’t do that if I worked as a mercenary. Asking for money according to the kill count? Just how confident is he? Normally, don’t mercenaries act even more cautiously? What, is he some A-rank merc or something?”

“No, he’s C-rank.”

“And he’s that confident? Is he because he doesn’t know anything?”

“Maybe, maybe not. In any case, it’s not such a loss for us. He wanted a thousand gold for each kill. And after 100 kills, he wants 10,000 gold per kill.”

“Really? Does he not know that mercenary contracts can only be made a month later if he dies and the contract is annulled? What kind of mercenary asks for 100 kills? I think he really doesn’t know anything.”

“He did seem to know about how mercenary contracts worked. And I even kindly told him that most mercenaries only make about 1 or 2 kills.”

“And he still wants a running guarantee? Even though he can get at least 4000 gold a week by being a C-rank mercenary?”

“Yup, that’s what he says.”

“Wow, that’s kinda amazing on its own.”

“For us, it’s not a loss whatever the outcome is, so I just said yes.”

“Of course, you did. We’re going to use them as meat shields anyway. If he wants that then we’re rather thankful.”

Mercenaries weren’t guild members, so there was no need for them to take any price for losing the war. So, they always acted quite cautiously.

That was why the employers of mercenaries didn't expect much from them either. It's just that no matter how cautious they were, they were still quite a powerful force, so they couldn't just *not* employ them.

"Oh, we are also running out of mana stones and we also need to buy more enhancement stones. We are too lacking in firepower compared to Gold Rush, so we need to make up for that."

"Urgh, looks like a lot of money will be going down the drain again. How are the funds doing? We can still hold on, right?"

"We can hold... but I don't know how long we can hold on for. At this rate, we might have to borrow the power from the Line."

"I thought you said we shouldn't do that?"

"Normally, this is definitely a bad choice... but we can't just die out like this. The guild war itself is going haywire, so we have to do whatever we can."

Taemin thought that they came too far.

It was no longer possible to wrap up the situation.

To kill, or to die... those were their only options.



"You just need to remember what I told you before. I also do not plan to ask much of you mercenaries. Just don't forget that we may ask you for cancellation charges if any of you act too cautiously."

Kim Sunghoon, leader of Skies Above Skies' 'A-4 Battle Group', reminded the new mercenaries of the warnings and opened his marking book.

"The first area will be Ice Valley. I asked three of you to mark that place yesterday, have you done so?"

There were three places that were in A-4 group's jurisdiction, and Kim Sunghoon had asked the mercenaries to mark the place beforehand.

Three of the mercenaries nodded their heads. With that, no one was going to be left out in this place.

"Okay then. We'll move!"

Along with his words, the 11 people including the three mercenaries and Kim Sunghoon were teleported to Ice Valley.

Their mission today was to find and eliminate any Gold Rush users while patrolling their respective areas.

Taemin was planning to attack the 'workshops' that Gold Rush was running and was funding their activities.

If Skies Above Skies could eliminate their workshops and cut their line of supply, Gold Rush would collapse from the inside.

Of course, it wasn't easy to find the secret grinding mines that belonged to Gold Rush, so they were looking all over the Land of Dusk with 10 groups of forces, but they still couldn't find any.

"There aren't any here... Should I give them some hints or something?"

Blake wondered about how he and his group could meet the members of Gold Rush before they arrived at Ice Valley. He had one objective... to crush Gold Rush with his own hands.

# Chapter 49

## The Appearance of a Legend (2)

'Let's keep watching for a little more.'

As a temporary guild member and not a proper one, mercenaries had practically no voice. They just did what they were paid to do.

In fact, most mercenaries were just mid-level users that were barely above 'beginner' level. Higher level users had better things to do.

The reason mid-level users were working as mercenaries was that they could earn several thousand golds if they find a place to 'lie down'(die) after fighting for a while.

This was much more profitable than hunting somewhere dangerous.

If a Gold Rush member saw Sanghyuk, no, Blake, there would be a red hologram floating above him. This hologram was that of the guild mark, and this was how guild wars worked.

Mercenaries were temporary guild members by contract, so this was a natural thing.

Vice versa, users of Gold Rush would have similar guild marks floating above their heads so it wasn't so difficult to recognize each other.

"Watch your surroundings. We don't know when and where Gold Rush will appear."

Even after they moved to Ice Valley, Kim Sunghoon kept warning the group members.

He was leading two parties, and guilds usually grouped two parties together to make a single group.

Any more than this would be detrimental to their mobility, and any less than this would make the group too weak. This was why groups were usually comprised of two parties.

Sometimes, it would be comprised of a single party of elites, but that was only used in special circumstances.

Right now, Skies Above Skies were concurrently being beaten back by the relatively stronger Gold Rush.

'The four groups of Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta groups swiped the battles, didn't they? The alpha team was the most powerful. But I'm not there anymore... would they have become weaker?'

In his previous life, Blake belonged to the Alpha group that was comprised of the most elite members.

In his memory, the Alpha group was an invincible group that did not know defeat. Even the 'First Team Above Sky' that Skies Above Skies had come up with was completely smashed by the alpha team.

'Oh yeah, now that I think about it, First Team Above Sky shouldn't even be made yet. If I remember correctly, there were no mercenaries in the First Team... would they let me in if I do good? I think it would be much more interesting then... '

Thinking about various things, Blake was watching around the surroundings with the other members of the group.

But at that moment... something he didn't expect happened ahead of him.

[It's Gold Rush!]

'Huh? Gold Rush appeared here?'

As far as he knew, there was no Gold Rush workshop around here. If Gold Rush appeared here despite that, it was likely that it was a force that roamed around hunting for members of the Skies Above Skies guild.

'Roamers... they should belong to either the Delta Team or the Epsilon Team... Whew, looks like I will have my chance to rampage here.'

Roaming around at random may get the patrol team annihilated if they weren't careful. Especially here in Ice Valley where Skies Above Skies was predominant. It was likely that enemy roamers were of considerable strength.

[Everyone get ready for ba-]

Before Kim Sunghoon's words were even finished, Gold Rush started running towards them. In this case, it was probably the enemies who found them first.

Fortunately, they hadn't discovered it too late, so Kim Sunghoon and others of the A-4 group could prepare themselves for battle. However, the first to strike was Gold Rush.

\*Flash! Flash!\*

Naturally, the first skills to come out on field battles were crowd control skills also known as mez (mesmerizing) or CC skills.

In battles between small forces, victory or defeat was sometimes decided from the moment the first CC skill.

So, the degree of effect of the CC skills used by Gold Rush would decide the flow of battle.

What was fortunate was that only one of the two CC skill Gold Rush used was an area of effect skill. If both of them were area of effect, their team might have been annihilated without even fighting.

\*Crrrack!\*

Around 5 users from Skies Above Skies had their feet frozen due to the CC skill. This could be considered good countermeasures. Especially since Skies Above Skies immediately used their own CC skills as well. The battle could be considered 60 to Gold Rush's favor and 40 to Skies Above Skies.

'Start recording!'

Obviously, Blake didn't get caught up in that CC skill either. In fact, he even had room to start recording a video right now.

'I'll grab on to the viewers from BJ Gale with Blake!'

\*Srrrr, clang!\*

Having started recording, Blake pulled out the Ogreslayer and looked ahead.

Gold Rush and Skies Above Skies had clashed properly with their CC skills. In this situation, formations or tactics didn't mean much.

No, in fact, battles on a small scale like this usually had nothing to do with formations or strategy anyway.

Unless the initial crowd control skills worked wonders, most battles became chaotic.

'Rule number one of chaotic battles... abandon your allies!'

Blake had experience with several chaotic battles like this, so he knew precisely what he had to do in a situation like this.

\*Ping, pa-pa-pa-pah!\*

Blake used one of the Soul Skills of the Bladeknight, 'Wild Dance of Swordlight' and rushed into battle. Wild Dance of Swordlight slashed everything mercilessly, it looked like it would slash at his allies as well, but members recognized as 'allies' by the system were not harmed in any way so it didn't matter.

\*Slash!\*

The only ones harmed were hostile entities; the Gold Rush users.

Abandoning allies didn't mean abandoning them and running away... but to forget about helping them out.

In a situation like this, offense was the most important.

\*Slash, slash! Paaah!\*

Blake wildly swung around his greatsword while avoiding enemy attacks as though he had eyes on the back of his head.

There were two reasons why such a movement was possible.

First was that he had an Ancient Knowledge specialized in chaotic melee fights, the Bladeknight', and second was that his battle senses and insanely high VRA were like a sharp sword.

Among the skills of the Bladeknight, there was 'Marginal steps' and 'Sixth sense amplification', and Blake was showing utterly absurd movements with these two skills.

Also, he had already put two fusion cards into himself when Gold Rush appeared.

'Burning heart' and 'Wings of wind'.

The costs of these two skills were 7 and 8 respectively and Burning heart increased his attack by a large amount in compensation of a reduction in defense, while Wings of wind increased movement speed and dodge rates.

Both of these were relatively expensive fusion cards that contained low-rank elementals. Of course, they did their worth and Blake would use them a lot in the future as well.

In his knowledge, there were only 2~3 fusion cards that specialize in personal buffing, and personal buffs worked in a way that cards with similar effects would be gobbled up by the better one so they did not stack.

\*Fwoosh! Crunch!\*

Another head flew into the air. A head separated from the body meant that HP became 0.

Mercenary 'Blake' of Skies Above Skies has defeated 'Shashashah' of Gold Rush.

There was no need to pick up any kill marks and the system would record a kill on the guild war automatically. Blake had already killed four.

Four consecutive kills. Only Blake was achieving actual kills. 5 from Skies Above Skies had died, and 4 died from Gold Rush, and those four were solely killed by Blake. And Blake was still sweeping the battlefield right now as well.

\*Screeech!\*

Blake held the Ogreslayer at a tilted angle to deflect an opponent's attack. The opponent widened his eyes, which said 'is this even possible?' but Ogreslayer was

already piercing his body by that time.

\*Splish! Crunch!\*

Light particles scattered around. Blake was already covered from head to toe with light particles. It looked like he was glowing and not covered in blood. If it looked like actual blood, maybe he would have looked like some bloody demon.

Mercenary 'Blake' of Skies Above Skies has defeated 'Genius Swordsman' of Gold Rush.

'Five.'

Blake counted in his mind as he rapidly turned around using Marginal steps.

\*Bbbbooom!\*

Magic attacks fell just where he stood. Gold Rush had already noticed that they might be wiped out if they didn't kill Blake.

That was why they started focusing on Blake. However, with that happening, the other users of Skies Above Skies became a lot easier.

The kill number for both sides was equally five, and the remaining members were equally nine.

However, with Blake confronting around five members of Gold Rush all by himself, the favor of the battle switched instantly.

It was definitely Gold Rush who had the preemptive attack, and it was definitely them too who had the favor of battle initially. However, a single user had changed that.

Not only did he change it, but he completely reversed it.

It was as though a massive typhoon had just swept by the battlefield. No one could catch him or block his way.

Even users of Skies Above Skies were shocked beyond belief.

The final result was that Skies Above Skies lost 6 members (of which 2 were mercenaries) while 14 members of Gold Rush was annihilated. 12 out of 14 were killed by Blake.

Blake had shown amazing might from the get-go.

However, the legend had just begun.



Having finished the first battle, Sanghyuk saved the video he recorded this time around and checked up on it in the Dusk Pavilion.

'Hawt dang, this one's real good. The last one was so crappy since I had to cut out so many parts due to identity leaks... but this time, I don't need to do any of that.'

Sanghyuk liked this video very much. In the first place, he had put in effort to make himself look cooler by adjusting the angle of the battle.

That was how relaxed he was during battle – he even had the time to adjust the camera.

'If I stack up five or six of these battle videos and release them through BJ Gale, that might be a shocker. Oh, I'll need to make a guild as soon as possible. After I make a guild, I'll tie BJ Gale and Blake on the same channel and register it as a shared account, then it might help me getting the live channel later.'

This was one of the reasons why Sanghyuk bothered to participate in this war.

Gaining viewership using cool battle footage and fulfilling the minimum conditions to acquire a live channel.

This was like killing three or four birds with one stone.

Having finished checking the footage, Sanghyuk stood up. He had a one-man guild to make. However, a message appeared through the mercenary-only channel for the Skies Above Skies guild.

[Sir Blake, can I have a word with you if you aren't too busy?]

The message was naturally from Taemin.

# Chapter 50

## Just as Expected

“I apologize, but this is more comfortable for me. I understand where you are coming from and I understand your conditions but I must refuse.”

Taemin quietly nodded his head after hearing Sanghyuk’s reply. He had expected things to reach this point. In the first place, it was rare for such a high-ranking user to be working as a mercenary.

“Understood. I will not bother you any longer.”

Taemin gave up. It wasn’t like him to drag things on, and he also knew that nothing would change that way.

“Instead, I’ll do my best as a mercenary while I still am.”

“Thank you. I will also pay you properly. Also, if you need anything, then please speak. We’ll support you with consumables.”

“Ooh! Then I’ll take that.”

Blake nodded with a smile. He wouldn’t refuse someone who would buy things from him and give them back to him.

“Oh, I’m also planning to move your group to somewhere else. Is that okay with you?”

“To where?”

“To A-S. It’s a group comprised of the elites of our guild.”

‘So First Team Above Sky isn’t created yet.’

Sanghyuk nodded his head and spoke.

“I don’t really mind, but... I wish to ask you for something.”

“Please speak.”

“I don’t really mind which group I belong to, but I wish to be able to act alone once a battle starts without being ordered by anyone. My fighting style isn’t really suited to parties.”

“Oh... you wish to be a free role?”

“I only need that during battle. I will naturally follow the leader’s orders when we are not battling.”

Taemin thought back to the video footage that a guild member had sent him after the last battle. Blake definitely did seem to be used to fighting alone.

“Very well then. I’ll see what I can do. However, can you follow orders on emergencies?”

“Of course, a leeway like that is naturally okay.”

“Then that’s fine. I’ll send the word beforehand, so you just have to meet up.”

“Understood.”

There were no conflicts. Since the two wanted the same thing, the conversation went well. Sanghyuk then went to the guild’s office in order to finish up what he wanted to do.

Of course, he couldn’t make a guild immediately. A mercenary could not belong to a guild.

That was why he only bought a guild creation permit and planned to sign it after his work as a mercenary was over.

‘As for the guild name... let’s just go with [One].’

He named the guild without thinking this time as well. Fortunately, the name [One] was not taken by any other guild.

After buying the guild creation permit for 50,000 gold, Sanghyuk left the guild office.

Creating a guild required a considerable amount of money, so the number of guilds was actually not that high.

There would even be some websites that sold guild names after that guild was brought to practical disbandment.

After preparing to create the guild, Sanghyuk returned to Skies Above Skies. After that one mission, Sanghyuk's treatment became very different. Taemin changed Sanghyuk's group to A-S, and this was currently the group with the most elite members of the guild.

When the First Team Above Sky was created later, 70% of the members of the A-S team would transfer there.

Moving to a team with better members meant that he would get opportunities to fight stronger enemies.

Sanghyuk didn't really care about this, as long as he could just rampage around. Thanks to Taemin setting the battlegrounds, he now just needed to fight to his heart's content.

Blake's true appearance.

The legend of the Sky-Gold war began with this.



“Are you 100% sure about that?”

“Yes, I am. I’ve already talked about it. If he lied, then the scroll of oath would activate... there’s no way he would lie risking his own account.”

Blackie, in charge of leading the strongest group of Gold Rush, the Alpha team, nodded after listening to a member under him.

The war between Skies Above Skies and Gold Rush became a war between lines; Line Sky and Line Gold.

This happened ten days after Skies Above Skies and Gold Rush went into war. And now that ten more days had passed... the flow of the war was actually very tight.

Even though they had fought for twenty days, neither side took a lead.

Gold Rush was on the advantage at the beginning, but with a freak appearing from the Skies Above Skies side, the war became balanced again.

“Blake... I will smash you for good today!”

Muttered Blackie while gritting his teeth.

The freakish Mercenary, Blake, had ruined everything. The number of kills by his sword numbered 1,147.

This was normally impossible by a mere mercenary.

It was to the point that Blake had practically changed the flow of the war.

Just once – killing him just once was enough to make him retire from this war, so Gold Rush tried numerous times to kill him, but all of their attempts had resulted in failure thus far.

Instead, they gave him more heads to kill.

In fact, this kill count was even a pressure for Skies Above Skies as well.

This was obvious since according to their contract, Skies Above Skies had to pay him over 10 million gold. This was just as large as how much Large Golden Mountain took from them.

Naturally, this was a huge burden on them. In fact, many people inside the guild inwardly wanted Blake to die.

Although not so blatant, they pushed Blake and the First Team Above Sky to more dangerous battles as well.

However, Blake survived to the bitter end. In fact, the other members of the team were helped by him in surviving as well.

In the end, Taemin negotiated with Blake to pay Blake 5 million in gold, and the remaining amount in items worth just as much.

Since they were being ripped 1~2 million gold every other day, this was the best they could do.

They were running so low on money that Chunwoong and Taemin were buying gold with real cash to give him the required gold.

However, they wouldn't even last a week at this rate.

Perhaps thanks to that, Taemin could only make the worst choice.

"Let's go over the scenario once again. So, once we lure that guy, the rest of the First Team Above Sky would fall back so we just have to surround him and kill him?"

"Yes. Even though Blake is called the immortal mercenary, we would be able to beat him if the Alpha team surrounds him."

"Well, yeah. Even he wouldn't be able to endure that. But why did the Skies above Skies guys suddenly give up on him?"

"I don't know exactly, but from what I've heard... the amount of gold they are paying Blake is actually astronomical. So, they have no choice but to make him retire here."

"They must be crazy... they acted like the smart guys but now they sound more stupid than me."

"Oho, you knew you were stupid?"

"Shut up."

Blackie smacked his junior on the back of his head and stood up.

"Guys. It's finally our chance to pay our debts. Blake this bastard... I'll definitely get you today."

Everyone from the alpha team stood up from their seats. 14 members including Blackie. Their abilities were quite top-notch.

However, they were crushed three times by the First Team Above Sky alone. All the members here were killed at least twice by Blake as well.

Especially in the case of Blackie, he was crushed three times, all miserably, by Blake since he was so adamant about battling him. He was almost traumatized by that right now.

‘This time for sure!’

Now that there were only 5 minutes until the promised time... Blackie gritted his teeth and looked ahead.

[I really don't think this is a good choice.]

Jetty, one of the core members of Skies Above Skies as well as belonging to the First Team Above Sky, was skeptical about this plan from the very beginning.

Honestly, there were users who were thinking the same within the guild as well. However, they all felt that this had to be done for the sake of the guild.

[Jetty, we can't help it. Me too, I honestly... don't think making Mr. Blake forcefully retire like this is a good choice, but what can we do? The burden on the guild is so high.]

[But this still isn't a good choice. Honestly, how many times were we helped by him? But now we're...]

[Hey, stop acting like you're a good guy. We only do what we were ordered to do. Why are you so naggy? Honestly, how much do you think that guy earns? That guy should be thankful to us instead.]

Not all members of the First Team Above Sky liked Blake. In fact, more than half was jealous and did not like him at all.

[True, that amount is insane. Ten million gold. Isn't that like 500 million won (500,000USD) right now? No matter how well he fights, ripping half a billion in less than a month is a total scam.]

[Half a billion? Seriously? That's insane.]

[But it's us who accepted the contract.]

[Don't sound naïve and if you don't like it, just go away. Don't ruin the plan.]

No matter how hard Jetty objected, it was useless. This codename 'Branching' plan was already in progress, and Blake would be in grave danger at this rate.

'Fuu... so I must make a choice as well?'

Jetty started seriously considering what to do while looking at the chat logs between his guild members.



The clash between the Alpha team and the First Team Above Sky. This was the fourth clash, so there was nothing strange about it.

Well, at least, it started like that. However... the battle turned quite strange as it progressed.

The way First Team Above Sky fought was Blake rampaging around all by himself, and the other members taking advantage of the opening he created.

So, Blake fighting all by himself was very natural. However, something was different today.

The other members of the First Team Above Sky did not take advantage of the opening Blake created, but kept going around to the outside.

And eventually... they all disappeared as though they couldn't keep up.

Blake was now really all by himself.

The members of the Alpha team of Gold Rush surrounded Blake in a circular manner to cut any path of escape.

Now Blake was surrounded by 14 enemies. This looked like he was going to die here no matter what happened.

"Blake! It's so nice to see you here."

Shouted Blackie at Blake with a very joyous expression. He was acting as though Blake

was already captured and in his knees.

However, Blake only smiled after looking around.

“Sheesh... they’re acting just as I expected them to.”

His smile meant one thing.

Everything went exactly as he had expected, and it was so obvious as to what was happening, so he ended up laughing.

“So even you can utter nonsense when you’re about to die.”

In fact, Blackie didn’t feel like his resentment towards Blake would disappear just because he killed him once. Honestly, there were almost no penalties for dying as a mercenary.

So, he was just trying to relieve some of his stress by making Blake feel inferior through this conversation.

“You talk a lot as always.”

Blake smiled once again while looking at Blackie.

It was always like this. Blackie always talked a lot at critical moments.

“What? Do you still not get the situation you are in-“

When Blackie kept on talking, Sanghyuk quickly took out some fusion cards and inserted them into his own body.

\*Ziiin, flash! Flash!\*

At that moment, the Alpha team prepared to assault at once.

Blackie also realized that this was not the time to talk and took out his weapon. However, Sanghyuk had already drugged(?) himself during that time.

“I’m thankful that you made a place for me to die... but what can you do? I don’t plan to die just yet.”

\*Srrrr, clang!\*

Blake laughed evilly as he took out the Ogreslayer.

Since everything was going as he had expected, he didn't feel confused or panicked at all. In fact, he even waited for this moment. With this, he now had an excuse, and with an excuse, he could do a lot of things.

So for now... he just needed to dance wildly with his sword.

Nothing had changed from his previous life. This was a place of fierce competition where people betrayed each other with no remorse if it was for profit –

– The world of EL.

# Chapter 51

## Payment Time (1)

A battle between one person versus many was usually in many's favor. However, that wasn't always the case.

There were exceptions.

Especially in the case of beings that were outclassed – 'common knowledge' didn't work on these people.

Like now.

\*Cl-cl-cl-cl-clang!\*

Blake deflected five arrows that were flying at him with the side of the Ogreslayer. This wasn't a special case, but just something he came up with on the spot.

Of course, there were skills that deflected projectiles like that as well. And those skills allowed for more sturdy and efficient defenses. However, it wasn't like those skills could not be imitated without possessing the actual skills.

It was like that with dodge rates as well; although one's own dodge rate stat was the most influential, it didn't contribute to all the dodges made by the player.

Sometimes, players with lower dodge rates showed high dodge rates using their senses.

This was one of the core systems in EL.

Some people said that this made games too influenced by talent, but in the first place, games couldn't be fair for everyone.

It was just that game companies developed the games so that differences in talent could be overcome with effort.

In any case, Blake could also imitate the deflection skill purely through his experience despite not possessing the skill.

\*Tap-tap-tap! Fwoosh, crunch!\*

And one more – a counterattack after a block was the basics.

Blake once again crushed an Alpha team member in front of him. The battle had continued for 20 minutes now... but Blake was still alive.

Instead, 8 from the Alpha team collapsed down. Of course, this didn't mean that Blake was still in a good condition.

He had 7 arrows sticking out of his body, and several deep wounds could be seen as well.

'What the heck is this guy?'

Blackie looked at Blake with trembling eyes after seeing another Alpha team member turning into light fragments.

'He's a total freak.'

When the battle began, Blackie only thought about how he could torture Blake more, but now he was worried about whether they could beat him at all.

"There's not a lot left of him! Keep pushing him back!"

Blackie thought that there was only one method left. What he was sure about was that he could not retreat in this situation.

'My HP is at 21%... dammit. It really isn't easy."

Blake habitually checked on his HP and looked at his surroundings. He didn't have a lot of HP left, and it was currently dropping as well.

At this rate, he would indeed fall before he defeated the remaining 6 enemies. However, he still had a trump card.

It was literally, a trump 'card'.

A fusion card...

Its cost was 16 and could only be used once every five days. It's name...

'Fusion card – a drop of phoenix blood... this is my reversal card.'

The fusion card 'drop of phoenix blood' was currently the highest-grade fusion card he could synthesize.

This card was something Sanghyuk had told nobody even in his previous life. The reason being that he only found out about the formula for this card one month prior to his time reversal.

He had researched for over 5 years in the game using a few information and hints. He was thinking about giving up since he had clung on to it for so long without success, but he could miraculously discover the formula for this card at the last moment.

Due to this card consuming multiple mid-rank elemental cards and other precious materials in card form, it was even more expensive than S-grade fusion cards synthesized from high-rank elementals, but in any case, the effects were amazing.

#### Fusion card 'Drop of Phoenix Blood' [Special, Limited]

: A very special fusion card made from – Mid-rank fire elemental card, mid-rank blood elemental card, mid-rank earth elemental card, mid-rank lightning elemental card, Firepetal card, Red ogre's heart card, Firelizard's tongue card, Flamesnake's bone fragment card – for a total of 8 cards. It is a miracle that this formula was discovered.

Effects : This card can only be used on self, and once used, all HP and vitality recover to 100%, and all injuries and poisoned status are healed. However, it will turn the user back to the original state after 10 minutes. The duration time increases as proficiency increases.

Duration : 10 minutes [Cooldown time : 120 hours]

Special effect : Once 10 minutes passes and the user returns to his/her original state, a special effect called 'Traces of the Phoenix' remains on the body. [Traces of the Phoenix : All healing effect is halved for 48 hours, but the damage received is decreased by 10%.]

Card proficiency : 0/250 [Proficiency rank D]

Cost : 16

This isn't worth mentioning, but a drop of a phoenix blood card was an insanely expensive card.

Just the material costs to make the cards amounted to around 1 million gold. Even though Blake wasn't worried about money, he couldn't use this card all the time.

"Let's start... round 2."

\*Flash, crackle!\*

Blake smiled as he inserted the card into his chest. Then, a streak of fire enveloped him before recovering his health to 100% and healed all of his injuries.

He would return to his previous state after 10 minutes, but he would be able to maintain his perfect state for 10 more minutes at least.

This was what he was counting one.

Although this could only be used once every five days, he would become strong enough to reverse everything once he used it.

This was the charm and power of Card Users.

It was naturally impossible for 6 people to kill Blake when even 14 people couldn't. Of course, Blake only had 10 minutes, but 10 minutes was definitely not a short time.



One per minute.

Five alpha team members fell in exactly five minutes. No exceptions. The Ogreslayer mercilessly severed their bodies, and the 6 tired members of the Alpha team could not endure that.

In the end, the only one left on the battlefield was Blackie.

To be exact, Blake had made it like that.

“You... you f\*ckin...”

Blackie couldn't talk properly in front of Sanghyuk. This was the complete opposite of what he was expecting. He was imagining Blake kneeling in front of him.

Blackie could not believe this reality and once again charged towards Sanghyuk. However, Sanghyuk easily blocked his attack.

\*Clang, Claaang!\*

After lightly deflecting Blackie's ax with the Ogreslayer, Sanghyuk slammed into Blackie to blow him away.

\*Boom! Grind, crack!\*

Blackie has mercilessly blown away. His HP and vitality were already below 5%. So, he couldn't even stand up after that attack.

“Urgh...”

Blackie tried his best to stand up again, but his body didn't listen to him.

Meanwhile, Blake approached him and quietly looked down at him.

“F\*ck... this sh\*t.”

If EL had a suicide function, then Blackie would just have chosen to commit suicide. He just felt that bad.

“How is it? Feel like waking up from your dreams?”

Blake mocked Blackie's delusions.

“You f\*cker, I'll definitely-.”

\*Fwoosh, crunch!\*

Blake didn't even listen to him and smashed the Ogreslayer into Blackie's head. Due to

the meticulous shock prevention system, he wouldn't feel any pain, but he would feel horrible.

Mercenary 'Blake' of Skies Above Skies has defeated 'Blackie' of Gold Rush.

Congratulations, your gathered karma has broken through the limit and you have leveled up.

As though to congratulate Blackie's death, it even gave him a level.

He felt very good about this.

He had earned a lot of karma through this war as well.

Currently, he was level 52.

He had leveled up twice throughout the Sky-Gold war. Not only his level, he had raised various skill proficiencies as well. His Ancient Knowledge was also slightly upgraded.

'I planned to leave once I had enough... but this is how you do things, eh?'

Sanghyuk had long anticipated this outcome and he already planned what to do once this kind of situation occurred.

"Skies Above Skies... you will definitely regret it."

Smiled he as he muttered. Then, he just left the battlefield like that. Then, he started mercilessly destroying the grinding mines of Gold Rush.

There was one reason he didn't do this until now... and that was to drag this war out for as long as possible. However, since he no longer had a reason to do that now, he started crushing all the grinding zones one by one.

The most important thing here was that killing a grinding user was counted as one kill just like killing a fighting member.

That meant 10,000 gold no matter who Sanghyuk killed.

Grinding zone users could be massacred over and over again, unlike the battle forces. That meant that the amount of Gold Sanghyuk would receive from Skies Above Skies would become astronomical.

Gold Rush receiving damage was a nice bonus as well.

The reason Taemin didn't exclude Sanghyuk mid-way through this war was that Sanghyuk would act alone and start massacring people either way and would make no difference at all.

However, even he did not anticipate this situation.

Two days... Sanghyuk had indiscriminately hunted Gold Rush for just two days. However... the number of kills he had increased over the two days was 716.

In gold... that was 7.16 million gold.

Honestly, Skies Above Skies had no way to stop Sanghyuk. Due to one wrong contract, The entire Sky Line would go bankrupt and not just a single guild.

What was fortunate was that Sanghyuk stopped after 4 days. After he stopped his massacre, Sanghyuk even contacted Taemin to meet up.

Taemin knew that this would all be over unless he solved this problem. And he also knew that only he could solve this problem.

"So you are willing to end the contract here on the condition that we pay you fully for the deeds you did until now?"

"Yes, exactly."

Blake smiled as he talked to Taemin. Honestly, Taemin thought that Blake would erupt out swearing at him. However, Blake was much more cool-headed than he thought.

"Before I answer you... can I ask you a few questions?"

"Sure, go ahead."

"Why... aren't you angry?"

"Angry? Why should I be angry? This is what life is. Do I need to be angry just because I was betrayed once? And let's be honest here. What would change with me getting angry? Only I would feel horrible."

Blake had said that with a smile, but Taemin could feel a frighteningly sharp thorn from his words.

'We touched the wrong guy.'

He finally realized how big of a mistake he had committed.

Blake was a card he should have never thrown away.

"Okay then. Just one more... why did you stop?"

"Skies Above Skies, no, the entire Line Sky's supply. If I go over that, then you would go bankrupt, and that doesn't do well with me. If I'm too greedy, I'll lose everything after all."

"Khm..."

After hearing Blake's answer, Taemin once again received a big shock.

'He's a total freak.'

Blake's judgment made Taemin frustrated. His level of judgment could be seen from the time he contacted Taemin.

Right now, a forum post by one of the core users of Skies Above Skies, 'Jetty', was calling about a huge wave.

Although it was a long wall of text, to sum it up, it exposed the blatant scheming of Skies Above Skies. And the 'main character' of that wall of text was Blake.

'He already knows that the social media is on his side. There's nothing I can do here.'

Taemin despaired. There was no room for negotiation.

He could only give Blake everything he wanted.

‘Since it came to this, I may have to sacrifice myself to save the guild and the line...’

Taemin had considered the worst case scenario. However, Blake continued his words as though he had already anticipated his thinking.

“If you’re thinking of sacrificing yourself, then don’t. Read the contract you wrote with me again. I definitely said that the contract is between me and the guild, Skies Above Skies, not you, Mr. Taemin.”

-Crunch- Blake’s words became thorns in Taemin’s heart. At this point, there was no need to talk anymore.

Taemin, no, Skies Above Skies had completely lost against him.

Like that, the titanic being known as Blake smiled while trampling on Skies Above Skies.

# Chapter 52

## Payment Time (2)

The war ended; and surprisingly, there was no victor. After a long period of negotiation, Skies Above Skies and Gold Rush came to an agreement to end the war without deciding the victor.

The two guilds, no, all the guilds of each Line was devastated after this one month of the war.

This was especially the case with Skies Above Skies and Gold Rush – it was surprising that they held up at all.

In truth, guildmaster Chunwoong from Skies Above Skies had lost about 500 million won (500,000USD) in real cash during this war.

He only held out since he owned a few expensive buildings. Otherwise, Skies Above Skies would have collapsed.

Gold Rush wasn't that different. Although they weren't ripped twice(?) like Skies Above Skies, the amount of money taken by Large Golden Mountain was immense.

Through this war, Large Golden Mountain ripped around 100 million gold from Gold Rush, no, Line Gold alone.

That was over 5 billion won in cash (5 million USD).

There was only one victor in this war.

The user called Large Golden Mountain, as well as Blake... Sanghyuk was the true victor of this war.

In fact, he wasn't even paid fully yet.

Large Golden Mountain still had yet to receive 10~20 million gold from each side, while Blake was yet to receive 7 million gold in items from Skies Above Skies too.

Although the war was over, Gold Rush and Skies Above Skies were still suffering. Before the war, both of their guilds were rated in the top 10 in EL, but now that the war was over, not to mention top 10, they wouldn't even be in the top 30.

That was how shaken they were in this war.

"You should have checked the list we've given you, but please tell us anything if you think something is wrongly evaluated. I will get them appraised again."

Sad Taemin to Sanghyuk before he opened the guild vault. Skies Above Skies and Sanghyuk (Blake) had already negotiated the small details and left a proof using a scroll of oath.

So, it was very unlikely that Taemin had scammed Sanghyuk through this transaction.

"There are no faults on the list at all. If I find any faults after looking at the items, I'll object to it then."

"Yes, okay then."

During the past days, Taemin seemed to have aged drastically. Of course, there were no changes on the game avatar. Just that... his words and psychology really seemed to be tired out.

Drrrrrag, clack!\*

Large guilds like Skies Above Skies all had one or more guild warehouses.

Skies Above Skies were a guild which focused on guild-scale raids, so they had quite a good selection of items.

Of course, in Sanghyuk's view, they were so-so at most, but he still had a few items that he liked.

'I don't need the others. But as for *that*... '

The only reason Sanghyuk traded the 7 million gold for in-game items was because of *this* item that resided in the warehouse of Skies Above Skies.

He immediately went to look for that as soon as he entered the warehouse.

Although this wasn't an item that was supposed to be buried here, it also couldn't be helped since there were no users at all who had reached a level of a master in the field of jewelcrafting.

Production-class users were divided according to their skill from 'apprentice – senior – renowned – master – heavenly – divine', and only masters and above were able to notice the value of this item.

Right now, there were no users at the level of renowned not to mention master. In fact, it was much harder to go up a level in production than actual levels, so just renowned-tier crafters were all treated very well right now.

'The Flashblack eye! Skies Above Skies guys should have put this here because they only thought that this was a unique-grade accessory, right?'

### Flashblack Eye [Unique]

- The light flashing inside the black jewel allows anyone to notice that the jewel is very special. However, it seems to require considerable technique to understand what that specialty really is.

[Basic stats] All stats +7

[Special stats] Resistance to all attributes +20%, movement speed +10%

[Special effects] N/A

[Item skill] N/A

'It doesn't look bad, but it doesn't look good either. That's why they are so ignorant about this. They should have rated this 700K gold since it's unique-grade, and put this here since it's high-ranked but no one wants to use it.'

Sanghyuk picked up the black jewel and smiled. This jewel could be equipped on the accessory slot.

However, this wasn't the true appearance of this jewel. This appearance was prior to its processing.

In other words, it was an ore.

If this was jewelcrafted, then it could be made into one of these – Flash Ring, Flash Necklace, Flash Earrings (×2).

These four accessories were named the Flash Set, and although they were each a unique-grade item, they were always included in the Best Five accessory sets until Sanghyuk had reversed in time.

The reason was the options that the Flash Set had. These set options were very good and special and were unique to them as well. That was why the price of these four items increased as time went by.

If the ingredients, the Flashblack Eye was readily available, then it would stop at a certain point, but the thing was that this item was incredibly rare to acquire.

They could only be gotten from pseudo-named monsters and had too low of a possibility of dropping to the point that it practically didn't drop at all.

It was even harder to get these than winning a lottery. Of course, this was revealed much later in the game, so currently, no one even knew the proper uses of this thing.

'I can make two items of the set with one jewel. That means... I can get the two-set effect.'

The Flash Set had a 2-set effect, 3-set effect, and a 4-set effect. The options that were loved by the users the most were the 2-set and the 4-set effects.

He acquired one, so he only needed one more to complete the full set.

'Should I pray for one to appear on the auction?'

He had already ordered the NPCs of Gold Mountain merchant group to buy that item regardless of price once it appeared.

Although there wasn't one yet, there was definitely a possibility of one appearing.

Expensive crafting items with high grade with unknown uses... Skies Above Skies had piled them up in their warehouse just in case.

Sanghyuk only selected the things which would become more precious later and put it into his bag.

The perfected items here weren't that good anyway since Sanghyuk possessed items much better than the ones here. It was natural that none of them caught his eyes.

After selecting barely 7 million gold's worth of items, Sanghyuk exited the warehouse. In Sanhyuk's eyes, the guild warehouse belonging to Skies Above Skies was basically a chicken nugget without the chicken.

Though, he didn't tell Taemin that.

"There were too many items, so I sent the things I couldn't fit in my bag into my bank."

Transferring items directly from the warehouse to the bank was something that cost gold, but Sanghyuk wouldn't hesitate to use such a tiny amount of money.

"Yes, I got the system message and allowed it. When I added things up, I think you're lacking on a few thousand gold..."

"Well, this should be fine. I guess I'll give up the remaining money."

"Then is this all over?"

"Yes, it is."

"It's the last time, so I'll be honest with you. I am very sorry for betraying you, but I had no choice."

Taemin was very honest. There was no need to lie in this situation.

"Like I said last time, I don't really care about such things. I'll just take my vengeance if I'm betrayed, and pay gratitude with gratitude. You can just think of it simply. This war... you could have won it."

The moment he heard that, Taemin realized how foolish he was.

If Taemin realized that Blake and Large Golden Mountain were the same people, he would have more miserably realized his mistakes, but there was no way he would realize that since those two avatars were very different in stature, appearance and even voice.

Having stripped Skies Above Skies practically bare, Sanghyuk changed to Large Golden Mountain and received the remaining payment from Skies Above Skies and Gold Rush.

Sanghyuk could yield around 120 million in gold alone through this war. This was after excluding material costs and labor costs.

Also, Sanghyuk also didn't stop on the Giant's Bus marking service, doing it once a day for two hours.

Only after he raised BJ Gale's popularity could he gain much more explosive interest in Blake's battle footage when he released it later, and honestly, it was very profitable, with him earning 100~150 thousand gold per day.

After finishing those up, Sanghyuk logged out from EL and started editing the footages he had piled up until now in the Dream Network. Since the guild 'One' had already been created, the only thing left for BJ Gale to do was to reveal his guild and introduce Blake slightly and release one of the footages he was going to edit today.

Since LGN was going to select one of these streamers for their live channel later in secret, he had to affix regular viewers to his channel.



[Awesome! What the hell is this?]

[Wow~ This is the legendary Blake? He's dope.]

[That sent shivers down my spine. How can a guy like him exist?]

[No wonder he's called the immortal mercenary. Skies Above Skies are idiots for throwing him away.]

[Didn't you hear the rumors? He's a money drain.]

[They should have kept him even if he's a money drain if he can fight that well.]

[Wow, that's cool. Did you just see how he parried all those attacks? Was that even possible?]

[The pros from other gamers who came over could do that once in a while if they timed it well... but this dude is just using it like a skill.]

[You mean that's not a skill? How's that even possible?]

[It is possible. I think his VRA is at least in the latter 200s. In other words, he's a freakin' genius.]

[Wow, that's some light to my eyes. He's butchering those enemies alone. Wasn't Gold Rush a relatively famous guild?]

[They're a workshop guild, but their skills aren't that too far behind any others.]

[I think they're the single top guild among the workshop guilds.]

[Nah, after this Sky-Gold war, another workshop guild took their place. Gold Rush is still going downhill.]

[But they wouldn't go down easily with their wealth.]

[Anyway, what class is that Blake?]

[At a glance, a swordsman-category.]

[He's the strongest among the swordsman-category users I've heard, seen and experienced. Wow, I really wanna party with him and hunt together.]

[I heard he's in the same guild as BJ Gale... why the hell are the users in that guild all freaks?]

[Perhaps they are a small group of elites.]

[I wanna join as well.]

[Would they accept if I applied?]

[Why would they accept trash like you?]

[F\*ck off. I'm better than you sh\*t.]

...

...

The viewers' comments were increasing, and people were also joining right now.

The number of viewers explosively increased.

It seemed like he may be able to gain a record for Pu TV's highest viewership.

# Chapter 53

## The Power of Money (1)

“Can I ask you something random?”

Listening to Ilya's report as always, Sanghyuk suddenly became curious about something.

“Please speak.”

“The Hiddenline... can I buy it with money?”

It was actually just an absurd curiosity he had.

Since he had so much money on his hands, he was thinking about how to spend all this money.

Although he had a few plans in mind, he thought that he would still have a lot of money left over even after doing all those things. This was why he was contemplating on how to spend the remaining money.

The question was something that just came to his mind.

It was more of a joke than anything... Naturally, it wasn't like Sanghyuk wanted a special answer or anything.

But an unexpected answer was uttered from Ilya's mouth.

“It is possible.”

“Right? Of course, it's imo-... what? I can?”

Sanghyuk widened his eyes in surprise and turned his head to look at Ilya.

“Yes, it is indeed possible.”

The hidden main quest ‘Shadow King’s first chain quest ‘Hiddenline of Hellfire Desert’ has met an unexpected change. A new chain quest ‘Hiddenline? So? How much do you need?’ has been generated.

Sanghyuk quickly tapped on the quest with the peculiar name.

Quest – Hiddenline? So? How much do you need? [Myth, Hidden, Main]

– Who would ever dare to think of buying a Hiddenline with money? Quite the guts. However, what’s important is that it’s not impossible. In the end, Hiddenline possesses a value, and that value can be bought with gold. However, you must realize that the value of a Hiddenline is unimaginably high.

Details : Buy all the Hiddenline scattered across Hellfire Desert and make them worship you as their lord!

Clear requirements : 0 / 40,000,000 Gold

Note : This quest can be given up. Once given up, the original quest will resume.

“Whoa...”

Sanghyuk could only laugh in bitterness the moment he checked the quest contents.

He found it absurd that such a high-difficulty chain quest can be solved with money.

However, the moment he checked the price, he realized that it wasn’t *that* absurd.

40 million gold... that was over 2 billion won in cash (2 million USD).

Basically speaking, 40 million gold wasn’t an amount that could be gathered just because one wanted to.

It was especially unimaginable that a mere individual could gather that much.

Perhaps the original quest was much lower in difficulty compared to gathering 40

million gold.

'It's easy, but expensive, eh?'

Sanghyuk looked at the part that said '0 / 40,000,000 Gold'.

Any other user would have declared forfeit the moment they saw that. No, even Sanghyuk would have given up if not for the war he had just been through.

However, he was in a slightly different situation now.

He had 140 million gold in his bank. Even though he was hoarding low-evaluated items from the auction, his gold didn't decrease.

'40 million gold... that's 2 billion in won... it definitely isn't easy to use all that money just to clear a quest. However... it does make me think about it since this quest is no ordinary one... I especially like the fact that I can save a lot of time.'

Actually, Sanghyuk had no plans on taking the gold he earned inside the game to the outside. Though, that didn't mean that he was going to live a humble life in reality.

He was planning to earn money through other means.

Earning money in reality – the start of it would be the live channel in LGN.

As long as he got that, there was no need to turn the gold he had in the game into cash. No, he probably would be able to invest real cash into the game as well.

He stopped speaking to Ilya and fell into thought. He slowly considered the advantages and disadvantages of this quest.

After a little time.

He came to a decision.

'Right now, it's definitely more valuable to buy time with gold!'

Honestly, it was insanely expensive, but Sanghyuk still decided to invest anyway.

There was no need to hesitate since he had come to a decision, so Sanghyuk

immediately transferred 40 million gold from his bank.

All 40 million gold has been transferred. The chain quest ‘Hiddenline? So? How much do you need?’ has been cleared.

The gold you have spent has all been spent on buying the Hiddenline scattered across Hellfire Desert.

Congratulations. You have become the master of the Hellfire Hiddenline. You can receive all the rights as the master once you go to Pallakan residing in the back alleys of Tune.

Your daringness in using such a large sum of money at once is a wonder itself. This wonder shall be remembered for all eternity. You have acquired the unique-grade title ‘The most lavish spender’.

The first chain quest of the hidden main quest ‘Shadow King’, ‘Hiddenline? So? How much do you need?’ has been cleared. The second chain quest ‘Heroic Lands, and yet another Hiddenline’ has been generated.

‘Oho...’

Having cleared the quest in one go, Sanghyuk nodded his head while checking all of the system messages one by one.

Although he felt bad about the gold he spent all at once, he really liked what he gained with those gold.

“Ah... did you perhaps...”

Ilya seemed to have felt something and suddenly looked around to Sanghyuk.

“Huh? You can feel that?”

“Yes... it’s because I’m your deputy...”

“Yes, I just took over the Hiddenline of Hellfire Desert.”

"Ah! So I did notice it correctly!"

Ilya nodded her head and smiled.

Ilya is marveling at your ability. The ring of fate becomes more sturdy and grows into 'Ring of Fate Lv2'. Your ties with Ilya deepens and you can see more of her secrets.

Ilya rejoiced as though it was her own achievement.

"I'll be off to Tune for a little."

"Yes, go and receive the Hiddenline officially"

Sanghyuk separated from Ilya and headed to Tune immediately. He also didn't forget to check up on his new title.

Title – 'The most lavish spender'

Grade – Unique

Description – Spending money can also become an achievement at this scale. Just who is daring enough to use such a large amount of money at once? Your daringness cannot be imitated.

Effects [Prefix: N/A] [Suffix: N/A] [Constant effect : >OK Goldback (S) : 2% of all spent gold returns to your bank every day at 24:00.<]

'That's an interesting title.'

After seeing the effects of the title, Sanghyuk closed the title window. But in fact, this wasn't just an 'interesting' title.

Considering the fact that Sanghyuk spent around one million gold every day, this meant that he would receive tens of thousands of gold every single day.

Having arrived at Tune, Sanghyuk went to see Pallakan. His current location was

kindly shown on the map by the system, so he didn't need to ask around.

"Pallakan, the Lamp of the Desert Wanderers, greets the master."

Pallakan bowed as soon as he saw Sanghyuk. To put it simply, Pallakan was a wanderer.

A wanderer that wanders around the back alleys of Tune – He was also called the Lamp of the Desert Wanderers.

You have been acknowledged by the Lamp of the Desert Wanderers, Pallakan. Congratulations. Your proof of qualification has finished and you have become the Master of the Hiddenline. You have acquired the special title 'Shadow Duke of the Desert'.

[You have acquired a highest-grade enhancement stone.]

You have become the Master of the Hiddenline, and your familiarity with the members of the Hiddenline is raised to 'Colleagues'.

The S-rank NPC organization [Hiddenline of the Desert], combines with the existing [Hiddenline of Falcon City] and changes to the S+-rank NPC organization, [Hiddenline of Two Continents].

The new organization management window is generated. You can efficiently manage and operate the organization through the management window.

Sanghyuk also just watched the stream of system messages without doing anything this time.

'Combine? It's possible to combine organizations?'

This was something even he saw for the first time. He had never heard or seen something like this despite his long years of gaming.

Sanghyuk stood still for a while as he tilted his head before opening the management window and selecting a deputy.

You have appointed Ilya, Lord of the Footless Horse, as the deputy of the Hiddenline.

Sanghyuk's deputy could only be Ilya.

With two organizations combined, quite a lot of things had changed as well. However, Ilya did everything properly once he appointed her.



Ilya immediately came to Tune once the two organizations were combined and she was appointed the deputy. To be exact, she used a recall to come to this place. In any case, since she came here, she reorganized the organization as Sanghyuk had ordered her.

She appointed Pallakan as her direct subordinate and immediately seized control of the Hiddenline of the Desert.

Sanghyuk really liked the way she worked.

Like always, Ilya did everything to perfection. Sanghyuk just needed to watch. However, just as he was 'watching', he was suddenly contacted. It was unexpectedly the Golden Mountain merchant guild. To be exact, an NPC merchant working there requested Sanghyuk for help through messaging.

Since the NPC was in Tune, Sanghyuk immediately ran to the auction and saw what was happening.

"I will take care of this, so please continue with your work."

Sanghyuk told the merchant NPC and immediately dragged the semi-translucent auction menu to the front of him.

"That's a dreadfully nice time. How can this come up right now?"

Sanghyuk was smiling while looking at an item that came up on the auction. The reason the merchant NPC messaged him was very simple.

It was a sort of a bug. To be exact, a condition error had appeared and he couldn't take care of the matter by himself and requested Sanghyuk for help.

The item that made the NPC confused... was none other than the 'Flashblack Eye' that Sanghyuk had taken out from Skies Above Skies' guild warehouse.

Sanghyuk had told all the merchant NPCs under his management to buy the Flashblack Eye regardless of the cost.

However... the problem was the price that it came up in the auction.

It was 1 million gold!

Normally, Sanghyuk supplied all merchant NPCs with 1 million gold. Since he resupplied them with 1 million gold every time they came back to him, there was not a case where the merchant NPCs were lacking in gold to buy something.

This was where it went wrong this time. The price of one item was 3 million gold, so even when the item was supposed to be purchased 'regardless of the cost', it could not be bought.

In the end, the merchant NPC decided that this was not a problem he could solve and contact Sanghyuk.

That led Sanghyuk here.

'Looking at the price... it looks like this seller thought that it looked like it was something, but was too bad to be used by himself, and thought that he would try and see the people's reaction rather than trying to sell it, right?... Fufu, but what can you do? No matter how expensive it is, I think I'll take it.'

\*Click!\*

Will you purchase the item, Flashblack Eye? (Y/N)

When the message appeared, Sanghyuk pressed Y without a second thought.

As Sanghyuk had estimated, the seller did not plan to sell this item. That was why he

put the item at an absurd price of 3 million, and was planning to see if there were any reactions.

However, contrary to his expectations, Sanghyuk bought the item without hesitation.

Later in the game, the Flashblack Eye could not be purchased even with tens of millions of gold. Sanghyuk was more than daring enough to buy that item for 3 million gold.

Having acquired the second Flashblack Eye, Sanghyuk once again could feel the power of money.

Money... it possessed tremendous power.

# Chapter 54

## The Power of Money (2)

Title – ‘Shadow Duke of the Desert’

Grade – Special

Description – A special title only possessed by the master of the Hiddenline in the desert. This title belongs to the master of the Hiddenline, and will naturally disappear once qualifications are lost.

Effects – [Prefix : Allows the user to create a doll out of sand in the same appearance. However, it does not work against beings with special detection skills, and beings of a higher level. Also, it disappears after receiving a certain amount of damage. The sand puppet acts as a clone, and it can move as the user wishes, and can even see, speak, and hear through the puppet. The duration is 2 hours, and the cooldown is 16 hours.] [Suffix : Allows the user to generate a sand armor to protect the body. The sand armor can be used in many ways. The duration is 5 minutes, and the cooldown is 10 minutes.] [Constant effect : Desert Mirage – dodge rate increases by 20%.]

The Shadow Duke title was very good like the other one.

This was even better than the previous one in regards to battle. Of course, the two simply couldn’t be compared just like that. In the end, both of them were very good.

‘If I get the items right, I might get a ridiculous dodge rate setting.’

Even though Sanghyuk had come back to the past, he did not imagine that he would be able to acquire all these things. But somehow, his dodge rate kept increasing.

Currently, Sanghyuk’s dodge rate was even higher than the so-called ‘professional’ dodge-tankers. On top of that, he had great battle senses and had the confidence to dodge better than anyone.

‘Even the heavens are helping me. Let’s reach the peak of dodge rates since I’m here!’

Sanghyuk decided that he would focus on dodge-related items or skills in the future.

After checking everything, Sanghyuk started using the money.

First, he hired ten more merchant NPCs, and 7 of them were C-rank, 2 B-rank, and 1 A-rank.

The C-rank merchant NPCs were to reside near the auction or the commissioned sales store like the original 6 C-rank merchants and buy the items that Sanghyuk had set.

Sanghyuk was planning to hoard all the items even from small villages as well.

And to the 2 B-rank merchants, he made them open a store in Falcon City and Tune respectively and manage them.

These two stores weren't stores that sold items.

These stores... specialized in loaning money with item collaterals.

The minor things under 100 thousand gold would be taken care by the B-rank merchants and the items over that price point would be handled by Sanghyuk himself.

There was naturally an interest, and the possession of the item would be transferred away from the borrower if he/she could not repay the original sum + interest within a set time.

Since every contract was done through a scroll of oath, there was no possibility of a scam. Since the scroll of oath was only 1 gold each, they could be bought in bulk without any issues.

Actually, Sanghyuk wanted to operate something like a gambling store rather than a loan business. However, after consulting with the merchants association, he found out that Dimensional Travelers could not operate adult facilities such as a gambling store.

In other words, the cream of the crop was monopolized by the developers.

That was why he went with the loan business instead.

Like that, two stores named 'Gold Mountain' simultaneously appeared in Falcon and Tune respectively.

Sanghyuk was aiming for two things with these two stores. One was to earn gold by receiving interest, and the second was to ‘legally’ swallow jackpot items buried under the sand.

It was actually quite easy to swallow these buried treasures. He just had to lend more money than what the people wanted.

Normally, the user then would not be able to pay back in full. If they did, then he would just induce the user to trade in some other way.

The two B-rank users possessed a passive skill called ‘merchant’s eye’, and could judge the real value of items much more correctly than most users, albeit not as correctly as Sanghyuk. That was why Sanghyuk would have almost nothing to do in the store if items below 100 thousand gold in value were handled by them.

As for funds, he had more than 100 million, so he didn’t need to be worried about that.

As for the A-rank merchant, Sanghyuk left him the overall management of the Golden Mountain merchant guild. Taking items bought by C-rank merchants and resupplying them with gold was done by Sanghyuk until now, but that changed this time.

The name of this A-rank NPC was ‘Maori’, and he did what he was worth.

If his business became bigger, then he may have to leave more things for Maori to take care of, but right now, there weren’t that many things to do.

Perhaps due to that, Maori cleaned the warehouse or helped with B-rank NPCs in his spare time.

An A-rank NPC’s AI was definitely different than the rest.

“Do that as I ordered you... Oh! You need to extend the contract period for the vendor NPC in Genesis Lake. Please take care of that.”

“Understood.”

Maori nodded his head as he replied to Sanghyuk.

If work regarding the Hiddenline was taken care of by Ilya, work regarding Golden

Mountain merchant guild was taken care of by Maori.

Right now, the other users didn't even know that NPCs could be used this way. In Sanghyuk's previous life as well, it was only 4~5 years into the game that users started utilizing NPCs properly.

Sanghyuk was ahead of the era. This was one natural ability that he gained after returning in time.

Having left most of the stuff to Maori, Sanghyuk felt that it was about time he focused on his own growth.

Of course, he didn't slack out on his leveling during this time either. However, leveling up wasn't everything in growth, and that leveling up was starting to get difficult as well.

A quadra-soul... No matter how much of the penalty he negated using numerous bonus effects, the amount of karma required to level up was increasingly higher the more he leveled up.

Although the one-soul users were feeling the limits of one Ancient Knowledge and were being left behind, the gap left behind by them was mostly being filled by double-soul users.

Double-souls were relatively good in terms of balance, and most new users were choosing Double souls right now.

They split the two Ancient Knowledge into something like one main job and one sub job.

Due to that, most of the megaphone users looked for 'Main(XXXX), Sub(XXXX)' nowadays.

However, once time passed, this would change again into something like a combination rather than two separate concepts. The time users started looking for the best combination of Ancient Knowledge would also be around here.

It was definitely not easy to activate a positive synergy with four Ancient Knowledge like what Sanghyuk did.

Of course, Sanghyuk wasn't 'complete' either. He still had to raise 'Bladeknight' into 'Shadow Knight', and he still had to raise the proficiency in elementalism and cards.

Only Giant's Blood, which was complete from the get-go, he didn't have much to do with.

Then was leveling and Ancient Knowledge all he had to care about? Of course not. True growth combined leveling, Ancient Knowledge, items and titles.

Currently, Sanghyuk had a lot of good titles. However, he didn't have a lot that he could use in battle. Once some time passed, competition would start rising for good, and it would be better for him to fill in the gaps while he still could.

'Inferno Pyramid. Let's conquer that place!'

Inferno Pyramid was the smallest dungeon in scale in Hellfire Desert but was the highest in difficulty.

Naturally, there were no users, parties, or even guilds that cleared this dungeon.

From what Sanghyuk gathered through the Hiddenline. Only the first named monster, 'Black Mummy' was barely conquered among the 7 named monsters.

The guild that conquered the Black Mummy was the guild Terrículum led by Kun.

Kun was Finnish, and Terrículum was strangely comprised only of Finnish people.

They had considerable achievements in regards to large-scale raids, albeit not as much in other fields.

Sanghyuk also knew of Terrículum very well. Terrículum was probably going to keep being reputed as the top in raid contents for quite a while.

'Giant's Cave marking bus business is almost finished now, so I think it's about time I give up on that... the problem is the contents that will replace that, right?'

He did not plan to end BJ Gale's streams just yet. In fact, he was planning to make it even bigger. He was planning to stop streaming the Giant's Cave marking bus, which users got bored of by now, and gather viewers with new contents.

'Let's go with raid contents just like I planned.'

Once he declared that he would conquer the Inferno Pyramid solo, then the number of users would only gather.

Of course, it would be impossible for even Sanghyuk to clear the Inferno Pyramid by himself with all of his stats shaved down by 30%.

At best, he would be able to kill the first and second bosses. However, these two bosses would give him plenty of stream material.

'Black Mummy... and the giant fire scorpion. I can procure enough contents for streaming with these two.'

He was planning for new contents for his streams.

He did not forget to leave out anything in his plan.



Inferno Pyramid.

This was a stereotypical 7-man raid dungeon with maximum of 7 members in a party.

Raid dungeons were separated into 7-man, 14-man, 21-man, and 28-man, and the most common were 7-man and 14-man. 21 and 28 were quite rare.

Of course, the difficulty of the dungeon didn't have much to do with the maximum number of party members. It was just that as the number increased, it was more likely for a user to make a mistake. The difficulty of the dungeon, though, didn't correspond to the number of entrants.

Inferno Pyramid was only a 7-man dungeon, but its difficulty was the highest in Hellfire Desert.

Kun and Terriculum weren't headbutting against that dungeon for nothing. Befitting of guys crazy for raids, they wanted to clear the Inferno Pyramid faster than anyone.

By now, the first kill bonus was no secret among the high-ranking users. In fact, there was even a rumor among the low-ranking users as well.

Once the first kill bonus was known, everyone started to go mad in hunting for named monsters. However, the good ones were already taken.

Inferno Pyramid was one of the few places that were left unconquered.

Sanghyuk had experience with the Inferno Pyramid in his previous life. Although not as much as the Giant's Cave, he experienced enough to be proficient in its mechanics.

So, he knew very well about what skills the 7 named monsters used, and what to do in order to conquer them.

He combined new fusion cards as well and set himself up for conquering the Inferno Pyramid.

Others would take a long time just to get prepared, but Sanghyuk would just buy anything he lacked with gold and could prepare within a few hours.

After finishing his preparations in the game, he logged out and started getting ready for streaming.

[BJ Gale's Inferno Pyramid walkthrough. Starts 7p.m. today.]

He put up a notice in his own channel in Pu TV, and put up a video footage from Blake's battles.

The current time was 4 p.m.

After sleeping for two hours, he planned to have fun in this raid he hadn't done for a long time.

# Chapter 55

## Inferno Pyramid (1)

"This part... what do you think? We've never thought of this before, no, we thought of it, but we never even tried it."

A man paused a video and started to explain to his friends while enlarging on a certain part of the screen.

Around twenty people were currently sitting down around a table in a large meeting room created inside the Dream Network. The reason they were here was simple.

Their boss urgently called for them.

These group of people had two commonalities.

One was that they were all Finnish, and two was that they belonged to a large-scale guild in EL, Terrículum.

"Wow, Black Mummy's living bandage was an attack that could be dodged? Hazad, didn't you say it was impossible?"

Hazad was a user whose Ancient Knowledge was a close-combat assassin-class, and he was the close-range damage dealer and dodge-tanker within Terrículum.

"It's not possible. No, at least I thought it was. Honestly, no matter how high your dodge rate is, I thought that that attack was impossible to be dodged since there were too many variables... but the world sure is wide."

Hazad was looking at the screen with a slightly shocked expression.

Until now, Terrículum brought a professional tanker with stats purely related to defense and health in order to overcome the living bandage attack.

With that user in the party, other aspects of their party were now flawed and this leads to an increase in difficulty.

“This is not the end. Let’s keep watching.”

Kun resumed the video. In the screen, one user was going against the Black Mummy with just a single pair of daggers.

This video was the 1-man raid against Black Mummy video that BJ Gale had streamed yesterday.

“Whoa...”

“That’s insane...”

“He actually...”

The users of Terrícūlum challenged the Black Mummy several times, and they realized the importance of this video more than anyone.

Normally, other people would just say ‘Wow, he’s good.’ And just watch the video, but the users of Terrícūlum knew very well how insane the movements done by BJ Gale were.

The video was 28 minutes long.

30 minutes into the raid, the Black Mummy would strip all its bandages and transform into a spirit of darkness, and at this point, clear was practically impossible.

Since the entrance to Inferno Pyramid would not open if the Black Mummy wasn’t killed, the Black Mummy had to be killed within 30 minutes.

In the video, BJ Gale killed the Black Mummy in exactly 27 minutes and 16 seconds.

Considering how Terrícūlum took 24 minutes, it wasn’t that big of a difference.

The video finished, but no one could speak anything.

The shock they received was something that no one else could feel.

“...Just what were we doing until now?”

“Is that guy amazing or are we the idiots...”

“Honestly, I think that guy’s amazing.”

“Let’s leave aside the fact that he dodged the living bandage attacks. I think he’s a close-range damage dealer... but how the hell is his damage so high? He’s stronger than the three of us attacking to the death... I’m speechless.”

“From what I saw, he kept recovering his health mid-way... how did he do that? Did he drink a potion?”

“He did drink potions, but I think there was another method.”

“I don’t know exactly, but not to mention recovery, I felt like he was buffing up himself by himself as well. Just how many Ancient Knowledge does he have?”

“Didn’t he just find a special Ancient Knowledge with all of those characteristics?”

“But even so... tanking, damage dealing, healing, AND buffing? Just what *can’t* he do? Is that supposed to be even possible?”

“Isn’t it hack?”

“At first, I thought that it might be hack... but he’s BJ Gale from Korea. There’s no way he’s a hacker.”

“He’s right. That problem already got blown out of hand when he soloed all the way into the 4th floor of the Cave of Giants. Raon even publicly confirmed that he was not a hack user.”

“I thought this guy was no ordinary from the moment I saw him do the Cave of Giants... but this is now beyond the scope of ordinary. He’s just a total freak!”

The users of Terrículum looked at BJ Gale in the footage in frustration.

However, what was even more shocking was that the video was not over.

The second video followed the first.

In that video, BJ Gale was fighting against the Giant Fire Scorpion that Terrículum was challenging for a half a month now.

“No way... this isn’t true.”

“There’s no way it’s true. Please tell me it isn’t true.”

“Just watch the video. I watched this live yesterday.”

“You did too? I did too... You’ll see what happens.”

A few members of Terríčůlum already saw the video beforehand or knew the results. However, they stayed quiet for the ones who didn’t.

The length of this video was 23 minutes and was even shorter than the last one.

The reason was simple. The time it took the Giant Fire Scorpion to vaporize naturally and fill the surroundings with hellfire was 24 minutes into the raid.

In other words, BJ Gale killed it before it could commit suicide.

The clear time, 23 minutes 22 seconds.

It may look like he barely made it before it committed suicide... but what was important was that it was killed.

“Just so you know, this was his 7th attempt; and he killed the Black Mummy in his second attempt.”

Kun spoke as he slowly stood up.

“That’s totally insane.”

“He must have practiced a lot before he got there right? Someone please tell me so...”

“For the Black Mummy, he could have done that... but not the Giant Fire Scorpion. I don’t know whether he did this as a mistake or on purpose, but that user even revealed the first kill bonus on his stream. Whether he practiced in secret or not... we were crushed by a single user.”

The reality that everyone knew but avoided, was spoken out by Kun in a cold voice.

“Why do you think I gathered you to watch this video? To take inspiration? NO! We

were too arrogant until now. We were egoistic just because we killed a few named monsters in the Hellfire Desert for the first time.”

The users of Terrícūlum wanted to retort to his words, but they had a hard time doing so.

“I kept thinking about this until now, but I think we need to change. So... I’m going to propose something very carefully.”

Kun spoke again after looking around to his allies in a serious expression.

“Let’s get rid of the first rule of application to our guild – ‘You have to be Finnish’. No matter how I think about it, I think it will be difficult to go to the top with this condition in effect.”

Surprisingly, Kun was speaking about getting rid of purism.

When in fact, the reason Terrícūlum met its demise in Sanghyuk’s previous life was precisely because Kun could not get rid of his purist ideals.

That led to an internal conflict, and that conflict eventually brought Terrícūlum’s demise. But this time, Kun was the first one to propose that they would get rid of the purist ideals.

This was a surprising change.

Considering that Kun’s purist ideals were what led Terrícūlum to its downfall, Sanghyuk could never imagine that it would get rid of its purist identity.

Naturally, the one who brought about this change was BJ Gale, aka Sanghyuk. Sanghyuk’s flap of his wings had become a storm and was sweeping across the world of EL.

This didn’t happen just in Terrícūlum. Numerous guilds and numerous users were changing. In fact, even Raon entertainment, the developers of EL, and even Chaos, the God of EL was changing little by little.

Of course, these changes weren’t very good news to the current Sanghyuk. In his view, the fewer changes the better.

However, these changes weren't something he could stop somehow. It would be foolish to halt just because he was afraid of change, so he boldly stepped forward without thinking about what changes he might bring.



"In the end, the only thing I can use is the scorpion gauntlets?"

Muttered Sanghyuk in a bitter voice while organizing the items he earned yesterday.

He ran for about 8 hours yesterday, and could eventually defeat the 2nd named monster, Giant Fire Scorpion, of Inferno Pyramid.

Obviously, his streams became a huge hit.

There was no other stream like it in the history of Pu TV. No, even after considering all histories of personal streaming media, there was nothing like that.

The star candy (donations) he got during 5 hours of the stream amounted to over 100 million (100,000 USD), and the number of viewers he got was nearly 2 million if he factored in the commentary rooms.

Countless people from all over the world gathered, so any 'previous records' became meaningless in front of this overwhelming result.

Especially when BJ Gale killed the Giant Fire Scorpion on his 7th attempt, the users of EL across the globe became shocked.

Honestly, running a raid solo was insane in itself, but he killed the never-killed-before Giant Fire Scorpion in 7 tries, so they were naturally shocked.

It became such a big issue, that the number 1 searched-for words was temporarily switched to BJ Gale.

"Well, I can't be full on the first spoon... So there's 5 left? If I kill 3 per day, then I guess I'll be able to clean up in around 3 to 4 days."

The reset period of Inferno Pyramid was 10 days. Since it was reset 3 days ago, there was a week left.

Sanghyuk was planning to kill the 3rd and 4th named monsters today, 5th and 6th tomorrow, and the final boss the day after.

Since he wasn't planning to stream from 3rd named monster onwards, he felt like he would have an easier time fighting them than the 1st and 2nd.

Honestly, his stream yesterday became such a hot topic that he considered streaming the 3rd one again, but he eventually decided not to.

He may be able to gain immediate income, but in the long run, it would gain him nothing.

His streams right now was nothing more than a bait to catch that live channel anyway.

If he could get that live channel and maintain it, then he would easily earn over 100 million (100,000USD) per week, and yet another 100 million if his paid video services went well.

Live channels weren't called the 'greatest honey jars' in his previous life for nothing.

Of course, live channels were all managed on a guild level, so individuals didn't really get much income. However, Sanghyuk was different.

Although he packaged himself as a guild, the content was just himself, an individual. That was why, if he could properly manage the live channel, he would be able to hit a huge jackpot.

"For today, I'll put some Blake battle footages that I held back on to keep some of those viewers from yesterday."

Since yesterday's stream was a huge hit, Sanghyuk felt that he should still do something for the viewers. So, he decided to stream the recorded footage about Blake's final battle in the Sky-Gold war, where the cruelty of Skies Above Skies and the crushing of Gold Rush was shown.

Like that, he put the footage on during his stream and started raiding Inferno Pyramid again.

His objective for today was the 3rd and 4th named monsters, and the estimated time in the clearing was around 10 hours.

# Chapter 56

## Inferno Pyramid (2)

At the current point in time, it was definitely a difficult matter to conquer the Inferno Pyramid. Not to mention the named monsters, even the normal mobs appearing in the dungeon was considerably strong.

Going past all of that and killing the named monster was a tiring matter even for large-scale guilds.

Currently, there were over ten guilds that were known to be challenging Inferno Pyramid.

However, despite that, they could not defeat the first named monster, Black Mummy, and that was because they didn't know the important points regarding the named monsters.

Terriculum had the highest understanding, relatively, but even they didn't know the exact answer.

In that sense, the video that Sanghyuk revealed as the BJ Gale helped the other guilds a lot.

Perhaps due to that, the large-scale guilds who were struggling with the first named monster until now instantly killed the Black Mummy and even succeed in the 2nd raid, the Giant Fire Scorpion.

This was only possible because BJ Gale had revealed to them the core points in conquering these named monsters.

At this point, people started wishing for BJ Gale to reveal all the videos in conquering the remaining named monsters, not caring about the first kill bonuses. However, BJ Gale did not reveal anything from the 3rd named monster onwards.

Instead, he revealed Blake's battle footages and made the people nervous. In the meanwhile, Sanghyuk killed the 3rd, 4th, 5th and eventually the 6th named monster

as well.

Originally, Sanghyuk thought that two days would suffice, but it took more time than he had expected, and eventually took 3 days to take all the first kill bonuses.

In the process, he had earned a lot of karma and obtained several rare-grade titles and items, but none of these attracted his interest.

The first spoonful did not fill him, but the 3rd and 4th spoonful did not satisfy him either.

However, he did not get disappointed.

There was one reason for this – it was the final named monster and the boss monster that made Sanghyuk choose Inferno Pyramid to conquer in the first place, the Sphinx.

In his view, the first six named monsters of Inferno Pyramid were just trivial mobs.

The real deal was definitely the Sphinx.

To exaggerate a little, the only boss worth killing in the whole of Hellfire Desert was this Sphinx.

This did mean that the Hellfire Desert was that desolate, but it also meant that the Sphinx was a relatively good monster even when compared to against the top-tier bosses of other continents.

Of course, there were no other users that knew of this fact. Since the difficulty of Inferno Pyramid was so high, they could not ever know that the Sphinx contained the cream of the crop.

So, right now, a raid dungeon called ‘Mirage Palace’ was much more popular than the Inferno Pyramid.

However, in Sanghyuk’s view, the Mirage Palace was just so-so. Clearing Mirage Palace tens of times did not amount to clearing Inferno Pyramid once in his opinion.

If there is a problem with this, it was that killing the Sphinx was definitely not an easy job.

Sphinx was not a monster that could be killed just with the walkthrough. No, just discovering the walkthrough required hundreds of challenges and discussions between top-level people.

So, Sanghyuk, who could skip all that process and start conquering, was at least tens of days ahead of ordinary people.

Of course, knowing the walkthrough and putting it into action was a different story altogether – especially for Sanghyuk, since he was alone and had to take care of everything by himself. With that being the case, there were more cases where the ‘traditional’ walkthrough could not be utilized by him.

Sanghyuk used the analysis of the named monster from his vantage point and first turned the walkthrough into a more of a theoretical walkthrough, which he would then use that to challenge the named monster and change his strategy on the go.

Since he had to do all that, even he had a hard time killing the named monster on the first go. The likes of Sphinx would take especially a lot of time.

Perhaps due to that, Sanghyuk had challenged the Sphinx 16 times on a single day but failed all of them.

The Sphinx was much more tricky than he had initially thought.

Its sandstorm attack was supposed to be taken care of by ‘one person’ and agro it to a corner, but since Sanghyuk was just one man, he could not do that.

In the end, Sanghyuk could only leave those sandstorms rage all over the place, and they dragged him down.

Even Sanghyuk would not be able to hold once he was swept up in the sandstorm. In the end, the only method is to avoid them all... but once the battle dragged out, sandstorms would fill the whole place.

The original walkthrough consisted of one member in charge of dragging all the sandstorms to one corner and stack them together. The problem was that Sanghyuk received the attention of the Sphinx itself, so it was virtually impossible to stack those sandstorms in one corner.

Honestly, once he solved this problem, he didn’t think that killing the Sphinx was a

difficult matter.

Now that he knew what the problem was, he logged out of the game temporarily and slept his lacking sleep. Even while resting, he contemplated on how to efficiently bypass those sandstorms.

After quite a while.

Sanghyuk found a clue. Whether it walked or not, he would have to try out in practice, but theoretically, it did seem possible.

Having arrived at an answer, Sanghyuk quickly ate his meal and logged into the game. While he was resting, the normal monsters leading to the 'Hall of Judgement' where Sphinx resided, had appeared again, but to Sanghyuk, who conquered raid bosses by himself, normal monsters posed no problem to him.

Sanghyuk easily killed those normal monsters in and lit the torch at the entrance of the Hall of Judgement.

\*Flicker!\*

This torch had the function to call out the Sphinx at the same time preventing the normal monsters from regenerating again.

The moment the torch was lit, the Hall of Judgement started trembling. Then, the sand on the ground started rising up.

\*Kroaaaaaaaar!\*

[Who asked for my judgment?]

The voice of the Sphinx rang out across the Hall of Judgement. The moment its voice rang out, the risen sand formed a certain shape.

A giant monster the same shape as the real sphinx existing in Egypt appeared. This was the final boss monster Sphinx, of Inferno Pyramid.

'Well, then. Should I start?'

Sanghyuk smiled slightly while looking at the Sphinx. Perhaps it may be tiring to

challenge it for the 17th time, but Sanghyuk was taking on the challenge with glee.

Actually, compared to working like a slave or a machine in his previous life, everything he did in this life was fun since he had his own will.

The method Sanghyuk tried.

It was... to use the prefix option 'Sand doll' from the special title 'Shadow Duke of the Desert', to 'dribble' the sandstorms.

It did seem possible. The sand doll's duration was two hours, and the Sphinx's raid allocated time was 40 minutes.

In other words, it had to be killed before it went crazy after the 40-minute mark, so 2 hours was more than enough time to conquer it.

The problem was that the sand doll would disappear once it received a certain amount of damage. If it was caught up in the sandstorm due to a mistake, then it may just be crushed just like that.

So, Sanghyuk had to put his effort in to control the sand doll.

Naturally, controlling the sand doll all the while he focused on killing the Sphinx was not an easy thing to do. So, he didn't think that this method was easy.

However, he thought that this was just trial and error as well. What was fortunate was that if the sand doll was un-summoned without being destroyed, then it could be re-summoned during the rest of the duration.

Meaning, he could try this method three times a day.

Since the cooldown was 16 hours, he couldn't use it that much, but it was definitely a method worth considering.

In Sanghyuk's previous life, there was one individual that appeared in every EL-related content. Floyd, the leader of the raid team, Hell, which was acknowledged as the greatest raid team for over 10 years.

If someone asked him the trick to doing a raid, he always answered the same thing.

'After you find your own method, it's the same for everyone after that. You just have to madly go against the boss... That is the greatest method.'

Of course, finding the *correct* method of conquering was the prerequisite for this, but once it was found, then the battle was about how fast the raid team became used to the conquering method without making mistakes.

In that sense, one advantageous thing for Sanghyuk was that he was conquering this boss alone, and could drastically reduce the time to get used to the conquering method since he didn't have to worry about teamwork.

Since he was an individual with many experiences in his previous life, he especially didn't make a lot of mistakes.



The method using the sand doll definitely did have an effect. It was extremely difficult to control the sand doll and fight the Sphinx at the same time, but eventually, he managed to stack the sandstorms to one side.

However, due to trivial mistakes, he either received a big hit, or was hit by the debuff 'Sphinx's riddles' which had to be avoided no matter what, and led him to give up the raid.

Since his attention was divided, he ended up making mistakes.

Sphinx's riddles debuff was a breath-like attack that it spat out in various ways, and just being scratched by it would lower his attack power by over 50%, so Sanghyuk definitely had to avoid this.

This was originally the easiest part of the raid since a tanker would just take those hits, but this method was impossible for Sanghyuk who had to run the raid solo.

In any case, he kept failing, but Sanghyuk could see a possibility within those failures.

Since he saw a possibility, the next thing to do was to just 'madly go against the boss' like what Floyd said.

Sanghyuk used a whole 3 days to go against the Sphinx.

Since the Sand doll skill required 16 hours of cooldown time, he could not challenge the boss limitlessly.

During the past 3 days, he challenged the boss around 14 times and he could finally reach the 5th phase of the Sphinx.

[‘Tis the time of Judgement! ‘Tis the time of Judgement!]

Once it entered the fifth phase, the Sphinx stopped using all of its skills and shot out green eyebeams that were called the ‘Eyebeam of Judgement’.

This Eyebeam of Judgement even looked like it could never be touched, and indeed, it was a frightening attack that would insta-kill any user with a scratch.

With that attack being shot all over the place, the ones avoiding it would definitely have a hard time.

Considering that, the fifth phase of conquering the Sphinx may look like the hardest part.

However, once the method of bypassing it was known, the fifth phase couldn’t be any easier.

The core point of passing through the fifth phase was the Sphinx’s riddles debuff.

Eyebeams of Judgement could insta-kill any life form, but there was one exception. A being that answered the Sphinx’s riddle (i.e. the one with the debuff) was not damaged in any way.

There weren’t a lot of debuffs needed either. Just one was enough. So, Sanghyuk had already received one debuff before it went over to the 5th phase.

Of course, this debuff would decrease his damage by 50% with every single riddle in a compound fashion.

Right now, Sanghyuk’s attack had decreased by half.

In this state, even considering that he did not need to care about any defense, there was only five minutes until Sphinx went berserk, so he might lack damage if he wasn't careful.

In fact, there were numerous raid teams that were wiped out because of lacking damage during the 5th phase.

This was especially so since one of the passive skills possessed by the Sphinx was 'Tenacious sand lion', which decreased all damage received by half once its health was below 10%.

In other words, being careless may lead to meeting the berserk Sphinx due to lack of damage.

Since Sanghyuk knew that very well, he did not take this situation lightly.

He consumed the fusion card 'Dark Flame Dragon' that he saved up until now, as well as all other buff-type fusion cards he could possibly use.

There was no need for defense!

Since Sanghyuk had anticipated this situation, he started barraging attacks at the Sphinx.

# Chapter 57

## Live Channel (1)

“Damn! Why is it so tenacious!”

\*Ta-tap, pa-ah!\*

Frowning, Sanghyuk pulled on the Ten Millennia Goldbone whip around the Sphinx's neck and jumped upwards using the reaction force.

The Sphinx was definitely tenacious.

Even in this situation, it still held on. Even though Sanghyuk had fully drugged(?) himself, it still held on until the very end.

In the end, time kept flowing and it was now 30 seconds past the 39-minute mark. After another 30 seconds, the Sphinx would go berserk.

Once that happened, its health would rapidly recover and use all of its techniques with the exception of the eyebeam of judgment.

And obviously, Sanghyuk wouldn't be able to endure even 1 second of the Sphinx going berserk.

Meaning, he wouldn't be able to kill it if he didn't kill it here.

“Gaah, you freakin' thing! Let's end it!”

Sanghyuk was already twice his normal size thanks to the skill Enlarge! From the Blood Knowledge ‘Giant’s Blood’, so he threw the Ogreslayer he held with one hand to the head of the Sphinx.

\*Flash, Pzzzt!\*

An upgraded version of ‘Spear of Zeus’, ‘Thunderbolt of Zeus’, was contained in the Ogreslayer, so it flew like a streak of lightning.

Even in that situation, Sanghyuk was holding on to the Ten Millennia Goldbone whip that wrapped around the Sphinx's neck. He pulled back on the whip with all of his weight so that the boss wouldn't be able to dodge his attack.

This was really his final attack.

If the Sphinx endured even this, Sanghyuk had no other hands to try.

\*Creeaaak!\*

He pulled back on the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip with all of his strength. Since his strength stat had increased immensely for the short term thanks to various buffs, he could temporarily hold down the Sphinx's neck from moving.

Although it was only for a second or two, it was enough time for the Ogreslayer, infused with 'Thunderbolt of Zeus' to strike the Sphinx's head.

\*Crunch, pshhhhhhhh!\*

The streak of lightning, no, the Ogreslayer struck deeply into the Sphinx's head and it started crumbling down.

\*Bbbbbooooom...\*

The sand that composed the Sphinx collapsed and poured down. Then, the system message that Sanghyuk wanted to see so much finally appeared in front of him.

You have defeated the boss named monster 'Sphinx'.

You have cleared the Inferno Pyramid fully for the first time. You have achieved something that no other Dimensional Traveler has done. This will become your achievement and be remembered for eternity.

You have acquired the rare-grade title [First Inferno Pyramid Conquerer].

As you have defeated the Sphinx for the first time, the first kill bonus will be applied and you have acquired all 52 items that could be obtained from the Sphinx.

Congratulations. The gathered karma has broken through the limit and you have

leveled up.

“Yes!”

\*Ta-tap.\*

Sanghyuk landed on the ground safely while gripping his fist in excitement. Although he had to put more effort in than he had expected, the important thing was that he defeated the Sphinx.

Not only did he just defeat it, he killed it for the first time.

The single item that only the Sphinx dropped but was really hard to obtain due to the chances of it appearing – the first kill guaranteed its appearance, so he could sweep the items on the ground with glee.

Naturally, the item Sanghyuk wanted was also within those items.

A helmet that was similar in shape to what the Sphinx was wearing... its exact name was the ‘Helm of Judgement’, but among the users, it was just called the Sphinx Helmet.

Honestly, the design of this helmet was crap. Once worn, the hair would naturally transform into a short, angular-style hair, so it was a little embarrassing to be worn in public.

That was why armors with crappy designs like this usually underwent ‘appearance change’ to be shaped into something the users wanted.

What was unfortunate, was that right now, there were no ‘armor technicians’, capable of changing the appearance of defensive items. NPCs didn’t do these jobs, so only users could do it... but that was impossible for the time being.

Though, helmets could be hidden using the ‘hide helmet’ function, so the embarrassment could be avoided.

Sanghyuk preferred functionality over aesthetics, so he was planning to wear the helmet even if there wasn’t a hide helmet function. Honestly, no matter how bad it looked, the options were too good to be forgone.

The grade of the item was unique, but it was usually treated the same as legendary items. The detailed options were as such:

### Helm of Judgement [Unique+++]

- The helm worn by the guardian Sphinx of Inferno Pyramid. Sand infused with special powers were refined using the heat of the desert to create this powerful helmet. Also, it is very special thanks to it being the first appearance of the Helm of Judgement.

[Basic stats] All stats +10(+3), vision +20(+6)%.

[Special stats] Fire attribute resistance +30(+9)%, Mentality +20(+6)

[Special effects] >Tenacious sand lion (S) : Damage received decreases by 50% when HP is below 10%.<

[Item skill] Small sandstorm : Able to generate a small sandstorm. The wind does not affect or damage allies at all.

[Bonus effect] Health : +10, Agility : +15, Movement speed +20%

“Oh, I expected a double plus at least... but it’s a triple plus! Great.”

Most items obtained from first kill bonuses contained one plus or more. If lucky, then double plusses were well within reach as well.

But Helm of Judgement came out with a triple plus attached to it. This was awesome.

The reason Helm of Judgement was comparable to legendary-grade items was because of the two special functions it had.

First, it possessed the passive ability of the Sphinx ‘Tenacious sand lion’.

This option would drive any tanker characters mad, and even without being a tanker, it wasn’t a bad skill to possess.

The more important thing though, was the second function, ‘small sandstorm’. The ones who acquired this helm first in his previous life actually didn’t know how good

this skill was.

It couldn't be helped since they didn't know how to use it. However, a few users later discovered the usages of this skill, and people got to know about how good this skill was.

The skill small sandstorm was more effective against users than against monsters. Not to mention defense and attack, it could even be used as a crowd control(CC) skill.

The reason Sanghyuk wanted to kill the Sphinx badly was also to earn this Helm of Judgement.

To Sanghyuk, both of these skills had meanings to him. He had great endurance thanks to 'Endurance of Giants' passive skill, and the tenacious sand lion skill would make him even tougher, while the small sandstorm was a skill that he had experience in using before.

Sanghyuk removed his original helmet and equipped the Helm of Judgement. Since he turned on the hide helmet function all the time, the Helm of Judgement disappeared as soon as it was equipped.

Having taken the Helm of Judgement, he put the rest of the items in his bag and returned to Tune.

The rare-grade title he acquired after killing the Sphinx, 'First Inferno Pyramid Conqueror', added 30 to all stats within the pyramid itself, so it was only meaningful inside the Inferno Pyramid.

Of course, Sanghyuk was planning to hunt within the Inferno Pyramid for quite a while. Killing named-tier monsters gave him the most amount of karma after all.

Right now, his level was 53.

Whenever he checked the amount of karma required to level up each time he leveled up, it made him subconsciously shake his head. Even though he wasn't in the true hell zone, level 55, yet, it was already taxing on him.

Due to this reason alone, he could only hunt in places that maximized his karma income.

Having returned to Tune, he immediately met up with Ilya. Now that she was in charge of two Hiddenlines, Ilya was looking much different from before.

What was interesting was that as the Ring of Fate grew by one stage, the title 'Ilya's Man' had changed slightly.

Title – 'Ilya's Man'

Grade – Rare+

Description – Ilya has fallen for you quite hard. She is a half-elf that succeeds the blood of elves, as well as a being that succeeded the seal of the Dark Moon. (Locked : Due to an unknown reason, some information is restricted.) Do you wish to know more of her secrets? Then steal her heart some more.

Effect – [Prefix: N/A] [Suffix: N/A] [Constant effect: Ah! My Ilya (A+) : Able to control Ilya perfectly for 2 hours a day. You may use her as a mercenary in your party, and even make her carry out special missions. However, her identity is still in a 'locked' state, so her stats are restricted.]

It wasn't a big change. There was just the additional fact that she succeeds the seal of the Dark Moon, and that 'Ah! My Ilya' had been raised to A+ and now he could use her for 2 hours per day instead of per 2 days from before.

Actually, he didn't use her much since her stats were too restricted before, but now that some of those restrictions were lifted, she looked like not such a bad NPC.

Her level was 55, and her Ancient Knowledge was a thief/assassin category. Above all, she had high agility-based stat distribution, so it looked like she would be able to keep up with Sanghyuk's movements.

'Looks like I'll have to look into that later.'

Listening to her report, he wondered about how to use her in various situations.

Now that the two organizations were combined into one, Sanghyuk's authority became larger as well. Now, Sanghyuk could acquire more information more frequently, and could manipulate information more freely as well.

Sanghyuk recently was spreading good rumors about 'Gold Mountain' through the Hiddenline.

The more customers he received, the faster Gold Mountain could grow, so advertising like this was very good.

"I think that should do for the work. Hmm, but Ilya... Can I ask you something?"

"Yes, please speak."

"What is this 'seal of the Dark Moon'?"

Sanghyuk knew that sometimes asking directly worked better than roundabout methods. There was especially no need to go through the trouble of roundabout methods in regards to NPCs like Ilya.

"Oh, that's the proof of soul that I've received from my parents."

Ilya started answering.

"If you ask me to explain about the Dark Moon in detail, then I cannot answer. It's just... you can consider it a special ability passed through the bloodline."

Ilya told him what she could tell him.

Sanghyuk also didn't think about digging further.

Having finished all his work with the Hiddenline, Sanghyuk exited the game for a little. Not everything he had to do lay within the game.

He had a lot to do outside the game as well. Especially nowadays with BJ Gale's streams, so he had to take care of today's content as well.

Today, he was planning to take a few still-cuts from the footage he got from fighting the 3rd to 6th bosses of Inferno Pyramid and broadcast them to the viewers.

He was planning to stream scenes where those monsters were lying on the ground, dead, so he felt like this could attract a lot of attention as well.

Of course, since he was only revealing a few still-cuts, no one would ever know that it

was ‘Immortal’ who killed the monsters and not ‘BJ Gale’.

What they would know was that Sanghyuk killed the 3rd through 6th monsters.

Just this would be enough to keep the viewers busy for quite a while.

Now that the live channel selections were closing in, it was important that he held on to the attention of the viewers using whatever means possible. Only that way would increase his chances of being contacted by LGN.



[WTF is this? Are you telling me that he killed all those named monsters? Then there’s only the Sphinx now? Wow... it’s actually possible to kill all of those monsters alone?]

[It’s possible because it’s BJ Gale. But even considering that, that’s amazing]

[But couldn’t that be photoshopped? He only showed the dead bodies of those named monsters. How do we know if he killed them alone or in a team? No one knows for sure.]

[I’m also a little doubtful about that. But BJ Gale is known for his solo playing... would he have created a team?]

[The highest-level users know each other, but I’ve never seen any of them close to BJ Gale. Perhaps Blake from the same guild, but that’s all I know.]

[Honestly, I also think that it’s hard to say for real if that’s from solo playing unless he gives out the actual footage.]

[But why is he not releasing the battle video then?]

[It’s too greedy of us to want that in the first place. Honestly, who would want to reveal that? We need to figure out the guide to killing those monsters by ourselves. I think this is the right choice.]

[Well, yeah. Even if he released that, only the large-scale guilds running those raids have it good. What good would it be to us, the plebs?]

[But I do want to see it though.]

[He'll release it when the time is right. And also, even if it's a team raid and not a solo play, isn't that amazing nonetheless? The other guilds are all stuck at the 3rd monster, but he (or they) got through to the final boss. We need to accept what we need to accept.]

[No one doubts BJ Gale's skills.]

[I really wanna enter that One Guild. If I look at Blake's PvP video, I wonder if that's the same human that I am, then I look at BJ Gale and wonder what kind of freak he is... a small elite force is the guild I've dreamed of.]

[I bet my finger that you are shit.]

[And how good are you?]

[Much better than you, I suppose.]

[Bullshit]

...

...

24 still-cut photos were revealed through BJ Gale's Pu TV channel. Although there was no battle footage, these series of photos attracted a huge amount of viewers.

BJ Gale selected relatively okay items among the loot and revealed their information to the viewers, so the viewers all watched the video while drooling.

Now that that was done, Sanghyuk was about to finish the stream.

But then.

The message that Sanghyuk was waiting for so much... came through his Pu TV secret messages box.

[Greetings. I am CP Kim Woonho from LGN. If it does not bother you, I wish to speak to you. I really enjoyed... (omitted)] (*T/N: CP = Content Producer*)

It looked like LGN took the bait.

# Chapter 58

## Live Channel (2)

CP Kim Woonho of LGN was an individual that Sanghyuk knew very well. In his previous life, this guy even made it to the president's position.

The Sanghyuk of his previous life conversed with this person a lot, and they became quite close personally as well. However, that was in the previous life, it did not happen in this life.

“Nice to meet you. I’m Kim Woonho.”

Sanghyuk met up with Kim Woonho himself. Since the matter was of importance, Kim Woonho wished to meet him personally, and Sanghyuk wouldn’t refuse that either.

Kim Woonho looked much younger than in his memories. In his previous life, they only met 7 years from now.

“I’m Lee Sanghyuk. Oh, BJ Gale name is probably more familiar to you, I guess?”

Sanghyuk shook hands with him with a smile.

“Looks like you customize your avatar quite a lot in the game. Your real figure looks much better.”

Kim Woonho started off the conversation with light flattery. Sanghyuk also went along with that, so the mood between them wasn’t so bad.

“...And that being the case, we of LGN wish to work with Mr. Gale, no, to be exact, the guild ‘One’, that is behind you. We are planning to reveal 30 live channels in about a month. Right now, we have entered a contract with numerous great guilds all over the world. If you work with us, I guarantee that you will earn more than you could possibly expect.”

Kim Woonho started talking about the live channel. He considered Sanghyuk as someone completely clueless about this industry and explained it in quite a lot of

detail.

Of course, Sanghyuk knew just as much about live channels as Kim Woonho did, but he couldn't really interrupt his explanation.

Sanghyuk made an expression that he was pondering on his decision as he listened.

“...This is our condition. Do you wish to fix anything?”

Kim Woonho handed Sanghyuk the contract and even talked about all the conditions they wished to take.

However, there was a small problem. It was that those contract terms weren't to Sanghyuk's liking.

“Yes. There are a lot of things I wish to edit.”

Sanghyuk made a slight smile and opened up the first page.

“Shall we first talk about the joint copyright holding of the videos?”

Kim Woonho did not know what kind of person Sanghyuk was at all, so he brought a standard contract, but unfortunately, the standard contract would definitely not work against Sanghyuk.

Sanghyuk started talking about the copyrights, profit ratios and even the numberings on the channels.

Since he was the manager of Team SKY's live channel during his director career, he delved very deep into this so he knew about this very well.

In some fields, he was even more knowledgeable than Kim Woonho himself.

Now that things came to this, Kim Woonho became awkward instead.

He was being swung around mercilessly by what seemed like a kid in his early 20s, being remarked in places he never doubted at all about.

The climax was the sharing of profits. Sanghyuk talked about a lot of profit models from viewership, ads, and subscription video service and made Kim Woonho listen

very carefully.

The LGN standard contract stated that LGN would take 7 parts out of 10. However, Sanghyuk talked about the unjustice of this ratio and talked about how this was unacceptable.

Sanghyuk was planning to change the distribution ratio at all costs. The reason for that was that LGN had already offered a 50:50 ratio for some of the large scale guilds.

Kim Woonho was no easy mark, so he didn't back out easily either. However, no matter how logical he was in his argument, it didn't work against Sanghyuk at all since he knew everything.

"In the end, as long as the term that I have to return the live channel if the viewing rates are low, exists, LGN will never make a loss. The pressure of drawing in viewers is solely burdened by us the creators. In that situation, I don't think it's good to set the distribution ratio so unfairly. Honestly, I know that live channels are just the start... aren't there bigger things? Let's start off things well."

Sanghyuk looked at Kim Woonho with a smirk. At that moment, Kim Woonho received a strange feeling.

"This guy... does he know something? Or is it that he has a good intuition?"

Kim Woonho had no choice but to continuously fix his evaluation of Sanghyuk.

When they first met, he was just a streamer that gamed well, but now he felt like he was facing a veteran in this field.

"Then what is it that you want?"

Kim Woonho admitted that dragging things out like this would not solve the problem. Honestly, the scale of this guild, One, was very small, but in terms of being a hot potato, it was the single hottest potato there was, so he could not let go of it.

This was also the reason why the conversation dragged out for so long.

"I also do not plan to ask you to change the distribution ratio purely to my favor. I just want to make it more justified. And so... why don't we try this? Aren't shows all about viewership in the end? So, we'll control the distribution ratio according to the viewer

ratings. If the viewership is low, then I wouldn't care even if the ratio is 90:10. However, I think it will be fine to drag it up all the way to 20:80 if the viewership is high... what do you think?"

"What is the standard of 'low' and 'high' viewership?"

"That we'll just use LGN's current viewership as the standard. And for precise measurement, we'll combine the paid subscription service's records. Oh! Why don't we just make a generalized formula after factoring in the paid video services as well?"

As soon as he finished those words, he started writing off a peculiar calculation formula.

Actually, this formula appeared much later in time in his previous life after the live channels became a big success and as problems started to appear as the industry became larger.

At the time, the one who made this formula was not a personnel from LGN but a well-known statistician, and this formula later became the single most used formula that decided the popularity of all livestreams.

This would only appear 10 years later in the future, so he did feel a little sorry for bringing up this formula right now, but in any case, Sanghyuk finished the formula professionally, and Kim Woonho couldn't say anything due to surprise as he watched.

It was perfect.

That formula that Sanghyuk just 'came up with', was the perfect formula that could calculate the popularity of a live channel.

He couldn't believe that this mere streamer who could game well could think up of such a formula.

"...Well, then. If we put that here and that there, it looks a little more balanced, right? Let's use this formula to calculate the popularity of the channel and decide on the distribution ratio based on it. A bit like a running guarantee, I guess. With that, LGN has nothing to lose too."

Sanghyuk's words ended, but Kim Woonho couldn't reply for a long time. Sanghyuk's method of doing this was too novel for him.

'Is this guy a genius?'

Kim Woonho looked at Sanghyuk in exclamation once again. He did feel that this kid wasn't simply just good at games, but at this point, he could be considered a genius.

"Ehem, for now, I understand. But this... formula of yours... can I use it?"

"Sure, go ahead."

This was not a difficult formula either. It was created by a well-known statistician, but that very statistician was a fan of EL himself and had created the formula for very personal reasons. Moreover, that same guy revealed it to the public for all to see, so this formula was used by every related personnel in this industry. In the first place, Sanghyuk didn't make this but just used the 'results', so he wouldn't be able to answer if someone asked him how he made this.

At this point, it would be easier for him if it was used industry-wide just like his previous life.

"Oh, and that way of contract you just explained to me, I think it's not something I can decide on my level. I will return to the company and tell you the results after I discuss it with the other people."

"Sure."

Sanghyuk also didn't think that their meeting would conclude here. Even though Kim Woonho was in charge of the entire live channel project, he would have to receive permission from his superiors if he wished to accept Sanghyuk's proposal.

Of course, Sanghyuk was also sure that Kim Woonho would tell him good news in a few days. The Kim Woonho he knew would never let go of such a justified method.

'And even if he does, it's not like I have no backup plan either...'

Though unlikely, Sanghyuk had already thought up of what he had to do if Kim Woonho rejected his proposal.

Sanghyuk and Kim Woonho finished their conversation that continued for nearly 2 hours and stood up from their seats.

Live channel service was now really in front of their nose... Sanghyuk was definitely going to take this live channel with the conditions he wanted.



Waiting for the message, Sanghyuk once again cleared the entire Inferno Pyramid again. This time, he used the appearance of BJ Gale with the 3rd and 4th monsters as service to the viewers.

Thanks to the 'First Conqueror of Inferno Pyramid' title that he got from defeating the Sphinx, he could kill his way all the way up to the 4th monster in BJ Gale's appearance relatively easily.

He split those footages into 4 videos and streamed them over the course of 4 days.

These series of videos also acted as a pressure to Kim Woonho. If BJ Gale's streams were very popular, Kim Woonho would definitely have to consider that as well.

Now that Sanghyuk was practically the most influential streamer of Pu TV, Kim Woonho could never abandon Sanghyuk easily.

[He ain't human, that guy. He ain't human.]

[What? BJ Gale used a team? It was all BS.]

[The guys that said it was a team play, go kys.]

[Looks like the large guilds will be having it good again. He shouldn't have revealed it, why the hell did he do that? Dammit.]

[Why the hell are you pissed? It will be good if anyone kills it. Well, I guess there are all sorts of people in this world.]

[Perhaps it's just me, but he looked much more stable than when he killed the 1st and 2nd monsters... Did something happen between that time and now?]

[What is there to say? Just shout! Long live Gale!]

[Long live Gale!]

[Long live Gale!]

...

...

The chat today was yet again filled with praises for BJ Gale. At this point, BJ Gale was treated like the pope amongst viewers of Pu TV.

Since the majority of the viewers were solo players as well, they were more relatable to Sanghyuk's play style.

Of course, sometimes there were users with malicious intents that got jealous of Gale and uttered nonsensical rumors about him, but they were pretty much negligible.

After that conversation with Kim Woonho, Sanghyuk was contacted again after 5 days. Sanghyuk connected the phone to the game, so he saw that he got a phone call during his hunting session.

First, Sanghyuk used the auto-reply function to send a message that he was currently in-game and quickly finished up his hunting session. Then, he logged out from the game and immediately contacted Kim Woonho.

Kim Woonho, who received the call, gave him a positive reply as he had expected.

[...If we slightly tweak the numbers, I think we can go with that contract.]

Sanghyuk had already expected that they would try to tweak the numbers the moment he proposed that to LGN.

So, he intentionally raised the numbers slightly when he first wrote it. Since the numbers were slightly raised, reducing it was no problem.

In fact, the numbers that Kim Woonho told him were slightly higher than he had expected.

“Understood. Let’s go with those terms.”

[You have made a good choice. You will not regret it.]

"Let's write up the contract at the place we met last time. The time... how about tomorrow noon?"

[That is fine with me. I'll message you as I depart.]

After ending the call, Sanghyuk gripped his fist with a big smile on his face.

He now acquired one of the greatest gold mines of EL, the live channel. And he had pretty good terms as well.

This was a much better news than acquiring several legendary-grade items in the game.

Of course, it was up to Sanghyuk himself if this goldmine was really a goldmine or landmine, but Sanghyuk had the confidence.

'The number one channel... I'll definitely get that title!'

Sanghyuk's eyes were burning with passion.

He wasn't the type of guy who would let go of such an opportunity.

# Chapter 59

## Beyond the Path to Death (1)

"As for the exact schedule and important details, we'll constantly provide you with them. Once the opening of the live channels is done, we'll have a lot to discuss... at that time, you just need to talk about it with this fella here. She will be in charge of your channel."

Sanghyuk finished up his contract with LGN. He liked the contract terms and the employee that Kim Woonho said was in charge of him was also to his liking.

Producer Lee Mirae – she was one of the rare female PDs of LGN, and Sanghyuk knew her too well.

Although she was a rookie PD right now, the Lee Mirae Sanghyuk met in his previous life was a charismatic CP that controlled all EL streaming media.

Her nickname at that time was 'Queen Bee'.

The nickname came from how she 'stung' anyone and everyone that she did not like.

Of course, she looked a little naïve right now, but once she adapted to this field, she would turn into a completely different person.

'She's a little hard to deal with, but she'll get her work done so I guess it isn't so bad. In fact, people like her are better.'

Sanghyuk preferred people like Lee Mirae when it came to business relationships. If it was someone who prioritized personal friendship over the business, then he would get stressful.

After a light greeting with her, they exchanged contact information. Sanghyuk had a little hard time adjusting to her 'original' behavior, but he could see the signs of the Queen Bee appearing inside her eyes.

Having dealt with everything that he needed to do offline, Sanghyuk returned home

and cleaned up his house. Since he was very busy lately, his house was a mess.

After cleaning his house, he went to the department store to buy some clothes. When he exchanged the star candy he got from Pu TV, he received tens of millions of won (10,000sUSD) on his bank account.

That was NOT including the insane amount of star candy he got from releasing the videos on Inferno Pyramid.

Sanghyuk once again felt the grandeur of personal streaming and bought a few luxury-brand clothes.

Although he didn't go outside much, he didn't plan to live like someone unemployed. Living poorly when he had the money wasn't something he wanted.

He was even planning to move houses once he gathered enough money later.

Even though he spent more time in virtual reality than in reality, human life was based on reality, so he could not be stingy on his stipend on himself.



Having enjoyed real-life after a long time, Sanghyuk entered the game again. If human life was based on reality, human delight was based on this world of EL, at least for him, so he felt good every time he logged in.

Having logged in, Sanghyuk first took care of the basics.

He opened the management window for the Golden Mountain merchant guild and the Hiddenline to see if there was anything that needed his attention. Then, he visited Gold Mountain to see if there were any items that needed his appraisal.

Gold Mountain, whose branches were in Falcon and Tune respectively, had become quite well-known amongst the users, but none of the items he got could be called 'jackpot' quite yet.

Despite that, there was a constant stream of items that he could profit off of, so he was making income.

Everything was going smoothly.

Since Sanghyuk already set the merchant guild and the Hiddenline synergize with each other in secret, all he needed to do was to apply oil and it would go smoothly.

'Let's see... My level is 53, my proficiency in Ancient Knowledge is pretty high now... should I be fine with going to the Heroic Lands now?'

Sanghyuk wanted to leave the Hellfire Desert as soon as possible. Actually, Hellfire Desert was the most desolate of the four continents in Treenark.

In contrast, the Heroic Lands was a completely different story.

In his previous life, people called the Heroic lands the 'land of prosperity'.

There were that many things to do and acquire.

Of course, at the current point in time, absolutely no one had gone over to the Heroic Lands yet.

It wasn't that the path was blocked. Although it was a path filled with hardships, there was definitely a way there. The problem was... the monsters that appeared on that road.

Many different types of monsters appeared at that place, with their average level being 67, while there were even elite-grade monsters near that place as well.

Obviously, some challenge-freak users tried to break through this road and enter the Heroic Lands.

However, not even one of them had succeeded. Users with high concealment, users who had high running speeds, users with escape techniques... users with many different skills endlessly tried getting through it, but they all failed mid-way.

So, this path was currently called the 'Path to Death'.

At least right now, the Path to Death really lead to death. It would require at least two months for the Path to Death to be conquered.

Once the levels of the users rose, and they farmed enough items from Hellfire Desert, they would only be able to break through the Path to Death with a large expedition.

Since it was a field unlike the Cave of Giants, which was a dungeon, human wave tactics worked to a certain extent. This was why it was ‘two months’. If there was a limit to the number of entrants, then even five months wouldn’t be enough.

Sanghyuk was planning to break through this very Path to Death.

‘Heroic Lands... now that’s the place where EL begins for real!’

It was the truth that EL was a great game, but it might seem like a slightly lacking game until the Hellfire Desert. Of course, there were so many good points that the cons of this game simply didn’t bother the users, but there were definitely elements that were lacking compared to other games.

However, this all changed one the Heroic Lands was revealed.

The land of infinite competitive contents!

That was the Heroic Lands. To mention a few... there would be the ‘Hall of Gladiators’ and ‘Hall of Mortality’.

Hall of Gladiators, like its name, was basically a colosseum – a place of free PvP.

It renewed every month, and special rewards would be given to the top rankers of each month.

Twice a year, there would also be a periodic event to select the ‘best of the best’, named ‘Duel of Immortality’. Other than that, there were various other ways of doing PvP contents, so it was a haven for users who liked them.

Hall of Mortality was also known to the users as the ‘time attack raid dungeon’. Naturally, this competitive content was aimed at users who liked PvE over PvP.

The contents were simple.

There were many different raid dungeons, and many teams competed for the shortest time clear of a dungeon.

For example, if there is a time attack raid dungeon called ‘Black Ogre dungeon’, a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 10 teams would enter a single battle, and they would enter that dungeon at the same time and compete to see who clears the dungeon

fastest.

This also operated on a monthly basis, and naturally had its own rewards as well.

Users enjoying PvP went to Hall of Gladiators while the remaining users enjoying PvE went to the Hall of Mortality.

Of course, that wasn't all there was to the Heroic Lands.

There were many public dungeons as well as good hunting fields. It wasn't called the Land of Prosperity for nothing.

The only obstacle was the Path to Death. Of course, there existed no other people like Sanghyuk who could pass through the Path to Death by himself/herself, so it was unknown whether if Sanghyuk could use those contents without any competitors, but even for the other things, it was better to go to the Heroic Lands quickly.

'Path to Death... O, Path to Death... Even I would have a hard time getting through it, right? But I now got my emergency escape method, so it's worth a try.'

Even if he prepared more from this state, it would be at most raising his level or raising his proficiency in Ancient Knowledge.

In other words, it wouldn't mean much.

'Actually, I don't have a reason to hesitate, do I?'

Sanghyuk decided on what to do with a slight smile on his face.



The entire length of the Path to Death was approximately 10km. The road itself was like a mountain, and once a user left the main road, they would be in serious trouble.

There were many high-level monsters on the main road, and off the road? They would be surrounded by mobs a few steps in.

In the end, the only way through this Path to Death was to break through this narrow path that spanned 10km. There was no other way.

In Sanghyuk's memory, the first expedition that broke through this road in his previous life numbered 150 people. The number seemed quite small, but considering the width of the road as well as the rough terrain, it was very reasonable. Otherwise, they would literally use human wave tactics numbering thousands.

The time it took for 150 people to cross that 10km path was an entire week. And during that week, the expedition experienced all sorts of hardships.

high-level monsters grouped up on them, and the elite monsters that sometimes appeared ambushed users from the dark so by the time the expedition broke through, there was only around 50 people left.

No wonder people called it the Path to Death.

Having prepared a lot of things, Sanghyuk entered the Path to Death immediately. Since he couldn't mark places with the Marking Book within the Path to Death, he would have to break through the 10km road in one go.

Even logging out was a pain, since a monster might strike from the dark while he was logging out.

\*Fwoosh! Crunch!\*

Sanghyuk lightly whipped the Ten Millennia Goldbone whip to snap the neck of a shadow wolf in the darkness around him.

Shadow wolves, shadow snakes, and shadow monkeys were stereotypical assassination-type monsters in this hellish road.

These things made the road even harder since they hid in the shadows and ambushed users before dragging them back to the dark and eating them.

Since they ambushed without any signs, even a user next to the one eaten may not realize that the user next to him/her was gone.'

However, even those things were of no threat to Sanghyuk. Concealment, darkness, shadow were meaningless to Sanghyuk who even had the Shadow Duke title.

With that being the case, Sanghyuk hunted those things while they were still in the

shadow before they even attacked.

Their other stats were mediocre compared to their ambushing ability, so they were being skewered one by one by the Ten Millennia Goldbone whip.

Sanghyuk was currently walking through the Path to Death at a leisurely pace while hunting those shadow-series monsters.

If the shadow-series monsters made breaking through difficult in secret, there were those that made it difficult in the open, they were the mutant orcs.

With an average level of 65, and walking around in groups of 3~5, they were named the Redeye orcs. They were the most common monsters that could be seen on the Path to Death.

\*Snoort, snooooort.\*

Having killed another shadow wolf, Sanghyuk looked up front. Four Redeye orcs were approaching him.

As mutant orcs, they were around 1.5 times bigger than a normal orc. They were slightly smaller compared to ogres.

Dangerous light radiated from their eyes as they saw Sanghyuk as though looking at a prey.

However, their so-called 'prey' had a nonchalant expression.

"Damned impotent bastards... it's been awhile."

Sanghyuk smiled at the Redeye orcs. The reason he called them impotent was because they were unable to reproduce as a result of their mutation.

Of course, this was just another background knowledge in the game, but they were indeed impotent.

And once, Sanghyuk had butchered these impotent guys every single day.

When numerous guilds made their expeditions against the Path to Death, Gold Rush also naturally made their own. At their vanguard was Sanghyuk.

At the time, Sanghyuk died tens of times while he fought against the monsters in the Path to Death. He relieved his stress from the workshop against these monsters.

He massacred those monsters like a madman. His colleagues in the workshop gave him a nickname back then.

‘Strong and tenacious monster shredder!’

That came about since Sanghyuk went overkill on those monsters.

“I remember it too clearly... how I smashed you all...”

He took out the Ogreslayer as he muttered.

He was about to show what a monster shredder was after a long time.

# Chapter 60

## Beyond the Path to Death (2)

The strong and tenacious monster shredder became even stronger than he was in his previous life. So to name him again... something like 'Way too overpowered strategic weapon of annihilation' would suit him better.

Sanghyuk did indeed brute force through the Path of Death with his strength, after all.

Numerous high-level monsters blocked his way, but Sanghyuk defeated them more easily than he had expected. The strength of a quadra-soul and the might of his equipment, as well as the experience he had gathered in his previous life had created an unexpectedly large synergy, and Sanghyuk could break through the Path to Death in a light manner.

Of course, he still had yet to tread on the last 1km, known to be the real hardship of the Path to Death, but at this rate, he would go through that zone without too many problems either.

\*Slash, crunch!\*

He vertically bisected a red-eyed orc once again with Ogreslayer and looked forward.

the terrain changed to a much rougher and narrower valley. Even light was scarce in the area. This area was the final kilometer of the Path to Death, 'Dark Valley Road'.

This zone boasted the highest difficulty in all of the Path to Death.

In this area, the disgustingly large numbers of red-eyed orcs did not appear anymore.

Instead, undead monsters named 'Darkness Knights' appeared, and these had an average level of 69. They were stronger than red-eyed orcs, and they popped out from everywhere in this zone.

To be exact, they kept rising from the dark parts of the Dark Valley.

If Sanghyuk did not know their existence, he might have been stumped – there were just that many of them and they appeared suddenly.

However, that was not the case; Sanghyuk knew what was coming at him. He even thought up of countermeasures.

He took out a fusion card from his chest.

'Fusion card Holy Light. Even Darkness Knights should have a hard time holding on against this.'

The main materials to craft this item was the Mid-rank Light Elemental card, and it additionally needed holy water card, high-rank ruby card, and high-rank diamond card. It was a relatively expensive card to make.

There were two effects to this card, and one was strong healing when used against an ally or to self.

The second was holy power enchantment when used against an item.

Sanghyuk imbued the Holy Light card to the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip.

\*Tsts, flash!\*

The power of light was imbued into the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip and it gained holy-attribute for 20 minutes.

Darkness Knights were of the undead-type and had the darkness attribute. Holy attribute was obviously a natural enemy for them. Of course, Sanghyuk didn't just prepare the holy attribute when he planned this.

The enchant was to just gain a weapon that would allow him to fight them more easily.

The most important factor was naturally his own fighting skills.

\*Slash, b-b-boom!\*

Sanghyuk slashed out with his whip as he strafed to the side. With the holy attribute enchant, the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip severed the head of a Darkness Knight that

was being spawned.

Since too many Darkness Knights rose up from the darkness simultaneously, the best method was to crush their heads before they even had the chance to completely take form.

He was already fighting four of them, and any additional one would cause him endless headaches.

\*Kirrr, kirrrk.\*

The Darkness Knights spat out very unpleasant breathing noises as they rushed towards Sanghyuk.

Sanghyuk was currently battling for two hours straight without a proper rest.

At this point, it wouldn't be surprising if he fell down exhausted, but he still firmly held on. Since his basic vitality was higher than other users, and his defense was an evasion-type defense, he hadn't used up a lot of his health.

In fact, he was worried that he would run out of fusion cards instead.

He had prepared a total of 12 Holy Light cards. Since each of their cost was 4, he had practically filled his entire budget with those cards.

But he already used up 5 of them.

Considering that he still had around 600m to go until he escaped this area, he felt as though he was lacking in cards.

'Ugh, these damned creeps are everywhere.'

He already knew that there would be a ton of Darkness Knights blocking his path. But expecting it and experiencing it for himself was a lot of difference.

\*Chiiik, fwoosh!\*

Sanghyuk swung his Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip to wrap it around the Darkness Knight closest to him and pulled it towards him.

\*Stab, kraa!\*

Sanghyuk stabbed the silversword into the Darkness Knight's head. It could not resist at all.

The silversword did not have the holy attribute enchant, but that didn't mean there was no damage.

\*Crunch.\*

Sanghyuk mercilessly twisted the silversword embedded on the Darkness Knight's head as he moved to the right.

\*Psh-psh-psh-psh-psh!\*

He blocked the attacks from other Darkness Knights with the one he just killed. Darkness Knights popped out from everywhere, but Sanghyuk did not panic in this situation.

\*Psh! Crunch!\*

Sanghyuk kicked the corpse of the dead Darkness Knight and swung his right arm at a strange angle.

\*Fwoosh, z-pah! Crunch!\*

This time, he used the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip like a sharp sword to slay a Darkness Knight slightly right of him.

Since it was already damaged in the process of fighting, it was killed in one hit with a severed head.

There were two left.

Since Darkness Knights did not feel fear as a characteristic of the undead, they still maintained their attacking positions.

In Sanghyuk's view, this was a lot more comfortable for him.

It was much more bothersome to chase down monsters running away.

\*Srr, srr.\*

But only up to that. He could only frown when he saw the dark regions around him distorting again.

There was no end to these Darkness Knights.

He wouldn't be as frustrated if they gave him a lot of karma, but these things gave him practically nothing.

"Oh! For god's sake!"

\*Fwoosh!\*

Swinging the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip again, he shouted in frustration.

The Darkness Knights latched onto him endlessly.

As more time passed, and as he neared the exit, more and more Darkness Knights appeared, and he could feel their strong will to not let him pass the Path to Death so easily.



If this was to be drawn onto a canvas... hundreds and thousands of black arms rising from the darkness grabbed Sanghyuk, and Sanghyuk would be shaking them off as he walked forward step by step.

The darkness behind him would be the Path to Death, while the arms would be the Darkness Knights.

Sanghyuk was currently fighting for 8 hours straight at the final kilometer of the Dark Valley.

The more he progressed to the exit, the more Darkness Knights there were, and Sanghyuk eventually ran out of Holy Light cards and was practically holding on with willpower alone.

Only around 40m was left of the end of Dark Valley.

Both his health and vitality reached their limits, but once he collapsed here, he would have to repeat this process from the very beginning.

'I'm NOT doing that!'

Breaking through the Path to Death was something that even he didn't want to repeat. Especially since he was so close to the end. The mental damage would be huge if he collapsed here.

\*Fwoooosh! Crrrrrunch!\*

Sanghyuk squeezed out the last of his strength to use the Ten Millennia Goldbone like a sword whip whirl. That beheaded dozens of Darkness Knights in an instant.

However, this didn't really mean anything. Behind those Darkness Knights were hundreds more.

Honestly, the Dark Valley Sanghyuk remembered wasn't this difficult. These Darkness Knights latched onto him like zombies from an apocalypse movie.

No matter how powerful he was, it was impossible for him to defeat all of them. Dozens were hard enough, but hundreds? He could forget about it.

After Darkness Knights started multiplying into the hundreds, Sanghyuk kept swinging the Ten Millennia Goldbone whip and the Ogreslayer mindlessly. It was hard enough for him to defeat the one in front of him. All of this felt like a bug to him.

According to his memory, Dark Valley did not have this many Darkness Knights. It would be impossible to explain this situation without using the word bug.

In any case, Sanghyuk squeezed out the last of his strength to defeat dozens of Darkness Knights, and as a result, could earn a few seconds of time.

A few seconds at best.

After these few seconds, new Darkness Knights would fill their gap. He knew this well. The reason he still struggled to the final moment... was to use his final method.

The one method he left until the very end.

Sanghyuk was planning to use that to exit this crisis.

'There's 40m until the end. If I don't succeed in one go, it's game over!'

There was no second chance.

This was all he got.

Sanghyuk quickly looked around him to find the exit. Then, he activated the item skill on his helmet.

Helm of Judgement item skill 'Small Sandstorm'.

The final trump card he saved for the very last, was this. Of course, simply using this skill wouldn't allow him to escape this crisis at no cost.

The sandstorm skill was something that could become OP or trash according to the user's skills.

There were a few ways to use this skill, and what Sanghyuk was about to use now, named 'sandstorm surfing', was the most difficult of them.

Sandstorm surfing.

Like its name, it was the act of surfing in mid-air using the sandstorm.

Sanghyuk threw the sandstorms in the direction of the exit and immediately jumped into them.

The sandstorm did not harm the user, but other than that, it was possible to levitate the user using the wind.

Sanghyuk was planning to use that physical force to 'surf' the sandstorm.

It could be considered as jumping again in mid-air. In any case, he maintained his balance as he moved forward using the sandstorm.

Since the Darkness Knights were all deflected away by the sandstorm, they could not

block Sanghyuk's way.

However, Sanghyuk didn't have it easy up there either.

Sandstorm surfing was definitely no easy feat. First, balancing on top of the sandstorms was practically impossible with normal senses. Even Sanghyuk had to try several times before he became proficient in it in his previous life.

Although he practiced it a few times after obtaining the Helm of Judgement a few days back, he wasn't entirely proficient just yet.

Balancing wasn't the end of the story; he had to proceed forward at the same rate the sandstorms did.

Most users failed this portion and were miserably flown away.

If this happened to Sanghyuk right now, then the results wouldn't even need to be mentioned. He would have to maintain his surfing position until the exit if he didn't want to get overrun by those Darkness Knights.

The sandstorm proceeded forward at a frightening force.

What was fortunate was that the valley was narrow and amplified the might of the sandstorm several times. As a result, the Darkness Knights in the path of the sandstorm could not even evade and were blown away.

Of course, with the might of the sandstorm amplified, the difficulty of riding it could only be amplified several times as well.

'It will be over if I fall!'

Sanghyuk raised all of his senses to the limits and held on with all his power. His desperate intention to not fall and start this all over again was holding him onto the sandstorm. Eventually, he could cross the remaining 40m in the air.

As the sandstorm dissipated, he jumped towards the exit of the valley.

He only needed to exit.

There was nothing else necessary. Just leaving this place would mean goodbye to the

Path to Death forever.

\*Flash!\*

At that time, strong rays of light poured onto his body and the message he wanted so much appeared in front of him.



PtF by: traitorATZEN